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THE CENTURY PHILOSOPHY SERIES

Sterling P. Lamprecht, *Editor*

ETHICS

TABLE OF VALUES AND THEIR SELECTIVE SYSTEMS

	Selective Systems	*Selected Values*	*Positive and Negative Names for the Values*
1.	Consummatory Field and Riddance Field	Affective	Pleasant *vs.* Unpleasant
2.	Structure of Purposive Act	Conative-Achievement	Successful *vs.* Unsuccessful
3.	Personal Situation	Prudential	Prudent *vs.* Imprudent
4.	Personality Structure	Character	Personally Responsible and Integrated *vs.* Irresponsible and Unintegrated
5.	Social Situation	Social	Socially Congenial *vs.* Uncongenial
6.	Cultural Pattern	Cultural	Socially Conforming or Integrated *vs.* Nonconforming or Unintegrated
7.	Natural Selection	Survival	Adapted or Adaptable *vs.* Unadapted or Unadaptable

ETHICS

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK REPRESENTS an application of general value concepts to the particular problems of ethics. The focus of attention is solely directed upon the justifiable criteria for moral decision and action. After a few preliminary considerations as to the scope and definition of the subject matter of ethics and the relevancy of the free will problem, the remainder of the book consists in an examination in sequence of the principal types of ethical theory which have proved worthy of serious concern. The conclusion finally reached is that each of the great empirical theories makes an indispensable contribution to sound ethical judgment, for each of these theories is based on a particular moral criterion which is justifiable under certain conditions but never unconditionally. The traditional conflicts in ethics arise chiefly from the claims of each of these theories for unconditional acceptance.

In the terminal chapter on the Social Adjustment Theory, a hypothesis is presented which shows a way for determining the occasions when one or another of the empirical criteria is applicable. This hypothesis offers, accordingly, a reconciliation among the great empirical theories, by which they no longer conflict with one another but co-operate.

The principal concept which leads to this reconciliation I am calling *selective system*. In one sense this is a novel concept, but in another sense it is as old as ethics. For the criteria of the empirical theories, as their mode of operation is described, turn out to be selective systems. They are ways in which nature selectively guides its own creatures toward conditions of stability and satisfaction. They are natural norms. By becoming aware of them and observing their interrelations care-

fully, men may find how their moral decisions are factually justified and ultimately reconciled.

Such a naturalistic view of ethics meets a good deal of opposition from a variety of quarters. The ethical schools that have offered the most challenging theories of a contrary kind are carefully examined before the conclusions of the final chapter are unfolded.

The curious or critical reader who may wish to examine in more detail some of the basic concepts brought out in this book —such as purposive structure, affection, conation, object of value, disposition, conscience, selective system—is referred to my earlier work, *The Sources of Value* (University of California Press, 1958).

I want to thank Professor Sterling P. Lamprecht for his sympathetic reading and helpful criticisms. Also, let me acknowledge my indebtedness to the publisher for all the care and patience that goes into the editing, designing, and proofreading of a completed book.

S. C. P.

Berkeley, California

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CHAPTER 1

THE SCOPE AND SUBJECT MATTER OF ETHICS

A Definition of Ethics

On a very hot day, young Dennis turns the hose from himself on the postman. Whatever may have been the excellence of the young gentleman's intention, a problem is presented for the young man's father. An ancient apothegm, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," comes to mind. There will be echoes of arguments about spanking, and the evils and advantages of acting on impulse, or of carrying on a sober rational discussion with the young mind.

At the other extreme of human relations is the problem of four ministers of state who are sitting at a table discussing the fate of a city of 900,000 souls. This issue has consequences that could precipitate an atomic war involving nearly everyone on the surface of the globe. In conflict are two ideologies, to which the loyalties and passions of millions of persons are bound. These ideologies seem incompatible, yet all these peoples deeply desire peace and not war.

Between these two extremes are the common heart-breaking problems of men and women who must find a way through situations of frustrated ambition, loss of fortune, craving or disappointment in love, family opposition, breaking-up of a

home, death of a loved one, poverty, and the slow wasting of disease—the subject matter of the great novels, tragedies, and comedies of literature.

All of this is the sort of material that makes up the concrete subject matter of ethics. What ethics is primarily concerned with, however, is not the vivid realization of these situations,[1] but how best to resolve them. How should the persons involved in them decide on the best line of action or of resignation if that is what is called for? How can they tell what is called for?

In the last analysis, that which will tell a person what is called for—whether the person is Dennis' dad, or a woman disappointed in the man she has married, or a prime minister working out a state policy—seems to be some sort of criterion that will distinguish the better from the worse. With few exceptions, these standards are what moralists have been concerned with. They have been looking for criteria of right and wrong, of better or worse regarding human actions—reliable criteria by which men can reach a sound judgment of what they ought to do.

Let us then define *ethics,* at least in an initial working definition, as *the study of the criteria of good and bad conduct.* Few writers on ethics would object to this definition as a way of entering our subject, although actually the end of a study of ethics, rather than the beginning, is the place to look for a final, well-considered definition of the subject. At the beginning it is important not to make a definition so confining that it will have the effect of excluding *by definition* some theory of importance on the subject.

For a reason that will be evident later (Ch. 5, pp. 84 ff),

[1] The vivid realization of human situations is one of the prime functions of aesthetic theory, which thus becomes a twin science with ethical theory. The one studies the ways of fullest immediate experience of human situations, the other the most effective conceptual criteria for their suitable resolution. For development of aesthetic theory along these lines, cf. S. C. Pepper, *Aesthetic Quality* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931) and Iridell Jenkins, *Art and the Human Enterprise* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1958).

there is special need to be more than usually careful in the definition of the subject whenever the discussion is about values (about good and bad). A definition can act as a criterion of value in its own right, and if someone takes an inflexible attitude toward his definition of what is good or bad, he virtually blocks off an open discussion of the subject. Our definition leaves the question of what are the criteria of conduct wide open. It does not even exclude the possibility that there are no criteria. As our illustrations at the beginning show, there is vital concern among men, from the troubled father to the troubled minister of state, for knowledge of sound criteria of action; and if it should turn out that there are none for the sort of situation in question, it is important for men to know that also.

The pivotal terms in our definition are *criteria* and *conduct*. The two together involve the total subject matter and so the scope of ethical study. The more we get into the subject the less can the two be separated. But roughly, *conduct* is the material that the *criteria* evaluate. Most of this book will be taken up with the study of ethical criteria and the ways of justifying them. For the most part, we can leave the explanation of this term to the chapters ahead. But we do have to go into a good deal of detail on just what is meant by *conduct* before we begin to study how ethical criteria come to bear on it.

Acts of Conduct

Conduct refers to a special sort of human activity. Whether some of the activity of animals other than man can be called conduct is an open question. It seems to depend on whether animals sometimes show signs of acting under ethical control. But until we get further into the subject, we shall do well to confine our attention to human conduct.

A common synonym for *conduct* is *voluntary activity*. A voluntary act is one in which a man can make a choice among two or more alternative acts. When a man makes a choice, he has

come to a decision. Some decisions are found to be better than others. Hence there must be some criterion determining the better from the worse. Consequently, the word *conduct,* in referring to acts of choice, carries with it the distinctions of good and bad among the alternative choices and necessarily also some sort of criteria by which these distinctions can be made. That is to say, the term *conduct* in ethical tradition has generally meant voluntary acts of choice which necessarily involve criteria for deciding whether the choices are good or bad.

We might almost as well have defined ethics simply as a thorough study of conduct. For as soon as anyone begins studying the acts of voluntary choice that comprise conduct, he finds himself forced to consider the distinction of good and bad that emerges among the choices. And in order to get to the bottom of that distinction, he is forced to examine the criteria by which this distinction between good and bad is made.

However, there is a certain advantage in our more extended statement of the definition. It emphasizes the importance of studying the *criteria* for determining what is good and bad in human conduct. If emphasis is not given to the criteria, the study might stop at a classification and local description of various kinds of conduct and not give serious attention to the criteria involved. Such an arbitrarily limited study of conduct would not be ethics. Some sociological and anthropological studies of human conduct make this sort of arbitrary limitation. That it insists on following the study of conduct through to the criteria involved is one of the reasons why ethics is often called a *normative* science. Ethics is a normative study simply because it explicitly includes, and, in fact, stresses, the study of the norms or criteria by which human decisions are distinguished as good or bad.[2]

[2] The failure to stress criteria in the definition of ethics is my principal criticism of another widely current definition which states that *ethics consists in the clarification of the meaning of sentences including such terms as* good *and* bad, right *and* wrong, ought *and* ought not. The clarification of the meanings of these terms, if it were carried out pertinaciously through their purely verbal dictionary and common usage meanings to

A voluntary act or an act of conduct involves, then, choice, decision, and a criterion for passing judgment on this decision. This does not mean that the criterion is always very obvious—or even that there was a conscious or deliberate choice. Ordinarily one only notices the action of a criterion, or the need of one, when there is a conflict such that a moral problem arises. When there is an opportunity of choice but no obvious conflict of alternative acts, the action taken is clearly as voluntary as a decision made in the face of distinct alternatives. All voluntary acts, we are suggesting, are acts of conduct because they are all subject to correction. Many of these acts raise no ethical problems. But one can never tell when the most trivial voluntary act may involve choice. And when it does the problem is automatically ethical. (At least it would be arbitrary to say otherwise at the beginning of an ethical study.)

I may decide on a Sunday afternoon to go out and take a walk. This is clearly a voluntary decision, and seemingly free from moral judgment. But Sunday afternoon happens to be just the time Uncle John and his family arranged to make a call, and I had forgotten all about that. Suddenly my walk turns out to be an element in an embarrassing situation. An ethical problem is precipitated and the walk turns out to have been a bad thing for me to have done. In this way, every voluntary act is subject to normative judgment or correction by some criterion, even though no judgment or correction is explicitly made, or needs to

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the study of the actual conduct and criteria meant by the terms, would come out much the same as our suggested working definition. The danger is that in failing to stress the importance of studying the criteria for good and bad, these writers may stop halfway in tracing out the meanings of these terms, arbitrarily limit their study to dictionary and everyday usage, and never get beyond their verbal sentences to the actual acts of choice men make and the actual criteria behind those choices. Many recent writers on the subject have apparently been quite satisfied to stop at the limits of verbal usage and the forms of grammatical sentences. Such limitations on the study of human conduct are, to my mind, as arbitrary as those of certain social scientists alluded to in the text. There will be occasion later to examine this linguistic approach more carefully (Ch. 12).

be made. My walk, for instance, would have been a good act if I had not forgotten about Uncle John. If it had not precipitated a moral problem, nobody would have thought of it as a moral act or have subjected it to an explicit moral judgment. Yet it was subject to normative correction all the time, as was shown when I was reminded of the appointment by seeing Uncle John and his family sitting on the doorstep. It is advisable to say, then, that all voluntary acts are included in the field of ethical study, since they are all subject to correction, even though the great majority of them never precipitate a moral problem.

That all voluntary acts are subject to ethical correction implies that the creative acts of artists, the technical decisions of engineers, and even the moves of a player on a chessboard, since they too are voluntary acts, are all subject to ethical criteria. But it does not follow that the ethical criteria involved are the same as the aesthetic criteria of the artist or the technical criteria of the engineer. Most ethical writers hold, however, that the ethical criteria are the dominant ones. Some writers have even defined ethics as the study of the dominant criteria for human activity. In the end, we may conclude that this is true. But it is not necessary to assume it, and the assumption might prove awkward as well as dogmatic. For there are some who would distinguish religious from ethical values and regard the former as the dominant and more significant values. And there are some who would regard aesthetic values as the ultimate ones and ethical values as secondary.

The most that we are saying is that, by our working definition of ethics, all voluntary acts are subject to ethical criteria; we are not saying that there are no other criteria for judging voluntary acts or that some of these other criteria may not be superior in various ways to ethical criteria. Nor, on the contrary, are we shutting out the possibility that ethical criteria do have a dominance of some sort over other value criteria. We are simply saying that whenever a man acts voluntarily, his acts come within the field of ethical judgment.

What about involuntary acts? The instincts, reflexes, and

mechanical habits, which are involuntary when they occur and often unconscious—do any of these ever or sometimes enter into the domain of conduct? Here the answer varies a good deal according to the ethical theory under review.

Suppose we consider habits first. The point that will immediately be made is that a man is responsible for his habits and that consequently all habits fall within the sphere of conduct. From this point emerges an important ethical principle: ethics is concerned only (or at least primarily) with acts for which a person is responsible. A man is held responsible for all his voluntary acts. The rather obvious reason is that these are acts which he can correct. He can *learn* to do better. Acts for which a man is not responsible, or for which somebody is not responsible, are not conduct. In general, acts of conduct are those which can be or could have been controlled and corrected. Now a habit is an action or set of actions that a man has learned. When the habit was starting, presumably the man's acts were voluntary. He could have started some other habit, or at least, not have started this one. So he is responsible for having developed the habit. Moreover, most habits can be broken, and the breaking of a habit is a voluntary act. So, he is responsible for letting the habit continue. Thus, even though the habitual act itself is involuntary and often unconscious, still habits are under voluntary control and must be included within the sphere of conduct. All the classical ethical theories would, I believe, agree to this. In fact, bad habits are a prominent target for moral reform. They are known as *vices*. And good habits, especially if they have beneficial social effects, are called *virtues*.

But what if a habit gets such a hold on a man that he cannot get rid of it—the smoking habit for some people or the drug habit—if it is, in short, an addiction? Notice that for ordinary common sense analysis of this kind, the question of habit is raised only as regards vices. A good habit that a person cannot get rid of—and surely there are such—is, in spite of its being a hardened habit, counted to the agent's credit, and perhaps even regarded as the very height of virtue. Are there not men who are

addicted to truth telling and cannot possibly tell a lie and men that cannot possibly cheat? These habits are in practically all ethical systems regarded as conduct, and as virtuous conduct of a high order. But what about a vice that has become an addiction? Can a man be held responsible for such an addiction, can it be called conduct? The average man in our era seems uncertain about this. And there is difference of treatment among different ethical theories. There is at least one moral code that exempts a drunk while he is drunk from moral responsibility, and thereby excludes a man's actions during this period from immoral conduct. But since a large proportion of writers on ethics would regard a man as responsible for an addiction, recognizing, however, that it is behavior requiring a special treatment different from ordinary bad habits, I propose to include addiction in this preliminary description, as conduct.

Insanity poses another difficult problem in a discussion of conduct. And what about the moron and, while we are discussing the problem of responsibility, what about the baby, the child, and the teen-age youth? Can they be held responsible for all their actions? The question clearly depends upon degrees of responsibility and capacity to learn. Indeed, is it not becoming clear that the heart of the question is the capacity to learn? Wherever there is capacity to learn, there is evidence of responsibility. And as there are degrees of capacity to learn, there are degrees of responsibility. And, lastly, wherever learning reaches in its efficacy to correct human behavior, there, however far from the originating voluntary act it may be, moral responsibility will be found, and to that limit the sphere of conduct will extend. To find that extent it becomes advisable to look somewhat closely into the nature of acts of learning. Such acts are identical with what are called purposive acts.

If this is the case, and I think it is, this brief examination of the nature of conduct has led to a vast simplification. The transitions were these: conduct can be equated with voluntary action, and this in turn with responsible action, which at the very least must be regarded as action men can learn to correct, which

is, finally, just what is included under the heading of purposive action. Conduct can thus, in its strictest sense, be equated with human purposive activity. In a broader sense, it includes also whatever acts are capable of purposive control.

This is a vast simplification, for we have come to know a great deal in recent years about purposive activity and can place this information immediately at the disposal of our ethical studies. We shall proceed to present this information in some detail in the chapter following. But there are still a few additional matters about the scope of ethical inquiry that need to be settled.

The Scope of Ethical Inquiry

We have just found good reason to equate conduct with purposive activity. But the scope of ethical inquiry in terms of our working definition—"the study of criteria for good and bad conduct"—clearly extends beyond the range of conduct. It includes, as we have just seen, all acts for which a man can be held responsible even when these are not of themselves purposive acts. It includes habits and addictions, and even reflexes like coughing at a concert, which can be indirectly (even if not directly) controlled by purposive action. On this same principle, a man's character, his dispositions for action, fall within the sphere of ethics. For a man is responsible for his personality and can directly or indirectly take purposeful measures to change it. Even his instincts (unmodifiable though they may be) are subject to purposeful control by organization of a man's personality. So they too fall within the scope of ethical inquiry. And so also do social institutions and other cultural objects which are built up through the co-operative purposeful agency of men. All these things and all else for which men can be held responsible for their existence and continuance, because of men's capacity to change them by purposive action, fall within the scope of ethics.

But not only are these acts and dispositions and objects within the scope of ethics, but also and even more significantly are the

criteria which determine the goodness or the badness, the rightness or the wrongness of all these objects and acts, within the scope of ethics.

What these criteria are will become apparent in the chapters ahead. Even if they prove to be fictitious and cannot be verified or certified, they still fall within the sphere of ethical inquiry, though only to be rejected ultimately. But our main interest as students is, of course, in the justifiable criteria—unless there are no justifiable criteria and the moral skeptics should (amazingly enough) turn out to be right.

But among those justifiable criteria that give strong evidence of being beyond sensible doubt are the goals and structures of purposive action, which we shall describe in the chapter just ahead. Since these are the criteria which determine the correctness or incorrectness of purposive activity in the very process of reaching goals, and purposive activity has turned out to lie at the heart of ethical conduct, these purposive criteria can be taken as pivotal ones within the scope of ethical inquiry. These will be definitely ethical criteria. Yet narrow as one's life experience may be, we all have discovered that there are other norms that modify and control men's purposive goals—norms of personality structure and social compulsion, for instance. Whatever norms there are that supervene upon men's purposive norms and make demands upon them, these also fall within the scope of ethics.

The pivot of ethical inquiry, according to our working definition, is (1) human conduct or human purposive action and the criteria growing out of purposive action and determining its correctness or incorrectness. But the scope of ethical subject matter extends far beyond this. It includes also (2) all criteria that have a normative control over the criteria embedded in human purposive action. And it includes (3) all acts, dispositions, institutions, and whatever else that is subject to human purposive control.

In summary, the scope of ethical subject matter includes:

1. The acts and norms of human purposive behavior.

2. Other norms which supervene over purposive behavior and have a controlling influence upon it.

3. Habits, addictions, instincts, dispositions, personality structures, social institutions and any other objects for which human purposive action can be held in various degrees responsible by the norms of 1 or 2.

From this summary, the pivotal significance of purposive action in the definition and understanding of ethical subject matter is conspicuous. The importance of describing purposive behavior in considerable detail becomes obvious. This will be the content of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

VOLUNTARY PURPOSIVE ACTIVITY

The Contrast between Voluntary and Involuntary Acts

IN OUR PRELIMINARY glance over the kinds of acts that fall within the scope of ethics and are called conduct, we have seen that these are voluntary acts for which the person performing them is responsible. We found that a person is not responsible for an act unless he can or could have corrected it. Further, it appeared that the ability of a person to correct his acts is the same as his ability to learn to do better. And now it may be added that only intelligent organisms capable of purposive activity are capable of such learning. So voluntary acts, responsible acts, acts open to correction, acts that can be learned, and purposive acts—all turn out to be the same group of acts. When performed by men, these acts comprise what is referred to as conduct.

Now, fortunately a great deal of work has been done in recent years describing the nature of purposive acts. This work has not as yet been very extensively absorbed into the study of ethics. Yet it has the closest possible bearing on the subject and resolves a good many issues that survive only through vagueness or lack of acquaintance with the pertinent facts. A brief exam-

ination of the typical structures of purposive activity and the way in which a person learns to correct his errors is consequently essential to an understanding of the subject and should be made at the very beginning of the study of ethics. For a moral decision is a purposive act. And although much more is involved in a difficult moral decision than a clear understanding of how the act fits into a purposive structure, still just this understanding goes a long way in an ethical evaluation of the act.

To appreciate the nature of an intelligent purposive act, it is well to begin by contrasting it with its polar opposite—namely, the instinctive chain reflex act. This is a type of act markedly characteristic of insect behavior. Recent studies have shown that there is some learning in insect behavior, but learning makes a minor contribution to an insect's mode of adjustment to its environment.

The following is a typical chain reflex act performed by a species of the digger wasp. When the female is ready to lay her eggs, she digs a hole, then finds a grasshopper and stings it, paralyzing but not killing it, then drags it by the antennae to the edge of the hole she has prepared, leaves it a moment and enters the hole to see or feel that the hole is vacant, then returns and tows the grasshopper by the antennae into the hole, lays her eggs in the grasshopper's body, seals the hole, and departs.

This is a chain of acts in which the conclusion of the response of one link sets off the response of the next link and so on till the terminal link is reached. The whole chain is set off by a chemical hormone instituting a need which is attached physiologically to the first link in the chain reflex. When this need is satisfied (or "reduced" as the psychologists say) by the terminal act of the chain of reflexes, the act ceases; or if the need continues, the cycle is repeated till the chemical need is finally reduced and no longer stimulates the impulse for the first link of the chain reflex.

This is an inherited and rigid chain of acts embedded in the anatomical and physiological structure of the organism. It was not learned. When the hormone need emerged, the wasp auto-

matically went into action and performed this succession of very precise acts in a precise sequence. The sequence is so rigid that if the grasshopper is pulled back from the edge of the hole while the wasp is within, the wasp drags the grasshopper up to the edge of the hole and again goes in the hole to see that it is vacant, and she will continue to do this repeatedly. If the antennae of the grasshopper are clipped off, the wasp becomes helpless even though the grasshopper has legs which are as feasible for dragging its body as the antennae. For this chain reflex linkage demands the antennae of the grasshopper as stimuli for the act of dragging.

This form of activity is completely blind automatic behavior. We would say colloquially that the wasp had no idea what she was doing. She is totally devoid of learning, or capacity to learn, totally devoid of alternatives or freedom of choice, irresponsible, and, in the strict sense, non-purposive. The act spectacularly serves the survival of the species, but not through any intention of the wasp.

If a man wishes to have some inner appreciation of the nature of a chain reflex act, he can obtain a fair approximation of it in a rote habit such as his learning of a part in a play or of a poem or of a piece of music. In playing a piece of memorized music on a piano, the fingers follow each other automatically in an acquired chain reflex sequence. And if a person comes to a place he has forgotten, he can sometimes recover it by going back a way and playing the sequence over. By the momentum of the sequence the missing link of response may return. His act is thus somewhat like the wasp's picking up the grasshopper again after it had been moved away from the edge of the hole and going over again the total remaining sequence in order. Such a maneuver by a man is, to be sure, a purposive act at a remove. The pianist intends to recover the forgotten notes in the piece. But his means of recovering them is to put an automatic mechanized habit into operation and hope that the automatism of the linkage will run itself through on another trial or two. The intelligent mind of the pianist has no more conscious control over the mechanized

linkage of this sequence of muscular co-ordinations in playing through the memorized section of music than a digger wasp has in his chain reflex behavior.

The only difference between the pianist in this instance and the wasp (and it is a momentous difference) is that if the wasp permanently lost a link of her inherited chain reflex mechanism, she would be utterly impotent. Suppose the wasp's environment should change so that whenever a grasshopper was laid at the edge of a digger wasp's hole it always snapped back a foot or so. A digger wasp would never be able to drag the grasshopper into the hole and to lay her eggs in the body, and the species would become extinct in one generation. But if the pianist permanently lost a link out of his mechanized memorized habit, he could set to work and *learn* the piece over again. Man and the vertebrates generally have the capacity of learning and can voluntarily create linkages of acts which they were not born with. This is what is referred to as intelligent purposive behavior.

One of the most illuminating ways of realizing how purposive behavior operates is to conceive it against the background of chain reflex behavior. One important form of purposive behavior is goal-seeking behavior. The goal is the end aimed for and the seeking consists in acts performed as means for reaching the goal. The instrumental goal-seeking acts in such purposive activity are not predetermined in the structure of the organism. For if they were, they would resolve themselves into successive links of a chain reflex, and the act would be automatic and not purposive. The instrumental acts are not predetermined and consequently have to be selected or chosen from a repertory of actions available to an organism and may be in error. The possibility of error is a sure sign of intelligent purposive behavior. In the digger wasp's chain reflex behavior, there was no possibility of error, for the wasp could not act in any other way than the way she did act. If a chain reflex activity is blocked in the middle, all an insect can do is to repeat the linkages before the block over and over again until fatigue, some stronger need, or death puts an end to the activity. Think of a fly or a moth on a window pane.

His automatic phototropism (light-seeking reflex) keeps him bumping against it. He never learns. For he lacks the capacity to learn.

By contrast, consider any simple instance of goal-seeking purposive activity. Imagine a geologist on a field trip in the desert. He realizes late in the day that he is thirsty and reaches for his canteen. He finds it empty. So absorbed has he been in his work that he has not noticed his thirst. Now he finds himself very thirsty and makes his habitual automatic act of reaching for his canteen, opening it, and raising it to his lips.

Notice that up to this point, the geologist's acts follow the same pattern as the digger wasp's. A physiological state of dehydration of his body institutes a need for water. On this impulse he reaches for his canteen; then feeling his canteen, he is stimulated to open it; having opened it, he is stimulated to bring it to his lips. This is an automatic chain of acts, the conclusion of each act stimulating the next act following. He may even have gone through the sequence entirely unconsciously, his thoughts being occupied by the geological problem that led to the field trip.

But from this point on everything is changed. The geologist tips his canteen to drink and he finds it empty. The habitual chain of acquired reflexes is blocked and broken, as the digger wasp's instinctive chain reflex was blocked when she came out of her hole to find her grasshopper moved or without any antennae. Now, if the geologist were to behave like the wasp, he would go on raising the canteen to his lips time after time after time, like a fly bumping on a window pane, and would eventually die of thirst right where he stood. But being an intelligent man and not an insect, the geologist immediately starts a quite different sort of action. Since his automatic habit is blocked at this point, his need of water great, and his thirst intense, a sensation of which he has suddenly become very conscious, he immediately begins to think of other ways of getting water. What this change of behavior means is that he has the capacity to *choose* other acts for attaining the goal of his blocked habit. And the acts which

he now proceeds to go through are *purposive* acts for the attainment of that goal. He begins seeking another set of acts to *bridge the gap* between his thirst impulse and the goal of satisfying his thirst. These acts for bridging the gap between the drive [1] and the goal are instrumental or trial acts performed for the sake of attaining the goal. He may never have performed them before and probably never put them together in this particular sequence to bridge this gap. The general structure of such purposive behavior is:

Drive / Gap / Goal

When the gap is filled with acts chosen to reach the goal, the structure becomes:

Drive / Trial Acts / Goal

The Structure of a Positive Purpose or Appetition

The geologist, finding his act of drinking blocked, begins at once, of course, to think of various alternatives. He looks about

[1] The analysis of purposive action in the following sections is in terms of drives. There are other current psychological theories of motivation, but the drive theory is well evidenced, supported by men of recognized authority, and appears to me the most fruitful and promising in its explanation of docile behavior. There are many varieties of drive theory. I am accepting a multiple drive theory. According to this view, there is a repertory of basic instinctive drives which through the mechanisms of learning and fixation bring about acquired drives. The process of acculturation is the development of acquired drives in man. But there are also numerous single drive theories which account for the multiplicity of human motives in terms of the channeling of a single source of dynamic impulse and make no sharp distinction between instinctive and acquired drives. Such a view is not untenable. But the mechanical reflex theories of motivation, like J. B. Watson's and E. B. Holt's, are quite surely inadequate as are also associational theories in the tradition of Locke, Hume, and Titchener. An adequate theory of purposive behavior must be one that clearly recognizes the drive-gap-goal character of appetitive behavior and furnishes a well-evidenced hypothesis of the selective process for the filling of the gap and also a hypothesis of the process of acculturation. A detailed treatment of this subject is given in the first half of *The Sources of Value* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1958) by the present author.

and sees several ridges of low mountains near him. He thinks that if he climbed one of these ridges, he would perhaps see a green spot in one of the valleys where he could find a spring or dig a hole and reach some water. In thinking this sequence of procedure out, he performs an intellectual act. He conceives a hypothesis. He has an idea. Really he has a series of connected hypotheses or ideas which are specific anticipations. He anticipates that a walk to the top of the ridge would give him an extensive view, that in this view he might see a spot of green, that a route down from the ridge would lead him down to the green spot, that in the green spot he would find water. These are all hypotheses about a series of instrumental acts to quench his thirst. Let us call these successive anticipations *anticipatory sets* [2] and symbolize an anticipatory set as A^n. Then numbering the sets from the final instrumental anticipation of getting water (A^n_1) back successively through the anticipated stages for attaining it, we have:

A^n_1 = anticipation of water in green spot
A^n_2 = anticipation of accessible route from top of ridge to green spot
A^n_3 = anticipation of view of green spot at top of ridge
A^n_4 = anticipation of accessible route from where geologist was standing to top of ridge

Now, each of these anticipations refers to some object that would satisfy the corresponding anticipations. These are subordinate instrumental goals leading to the terminal goal of the geologist's thirst drive, which is the satisfaction or quiescence of his thirst. Let us call these subordinate instrumental goals, *goal objects,* and symbolize a goal object as O^g. Then

[2] The advantage in calling these *anticipatory sets* instead of anticipations or hypotheses is that no necessary implication or connotation of consciousness and imagery or of verbalization comes up. Docile animals other than men exhibit purposive behavior and have anticipatory sets, and it is often doubtful if they have imagery or even consciousness and certain that they do not have language. Even man does not need images or words to perform many of his purposive acts. A *set* or readiness to act is sufficient.

O^g_1 = the water anticipated by A^n_1
O^g_2 = the accessible route anticipated by A^n_2
O^g_3 = the view anticipated by A^n_3
O^g_4 = the accessible route anticipated by A^n_4

But in describing the geologist's purpose, these instrumental anticipations with their goal objects are not all that is involved. These instrumental acts are for the sake of reaching a certain unique and special act, which is the terminal act and ultimate goal of the purpose, namely the act of quenching the geologist's thirst. This is the act required to bring satisfaction to his thirst impulse or drive. We may call this final act the "quiescence pattern," since it produces quiescence of the thirst drive, and we may symbolize it as Q^p. Then there is the thirst impulse itself which may be symbolized as I.

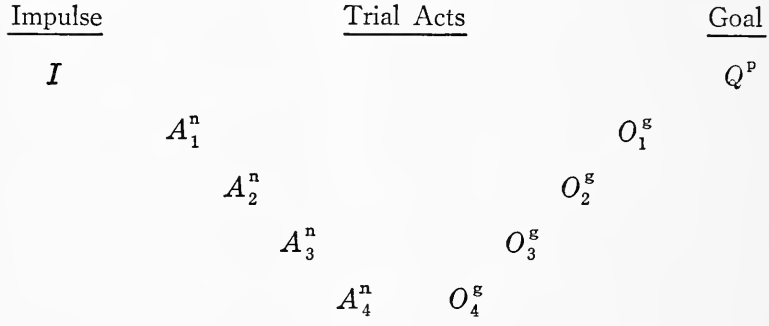
A word more about the symbol Q^p. The culminating act of a positive purpose like the geologist's desire to satisfy his thirst is not the mere reduction or quiescence of the drive, but is a positive act of some duration. Here it is the geologist's drinking of the water and the absorbing of it into his system, and also usually the delightful satisfaction of feeling the liquid in his mouth and throat. That this is a positive consummatory act is brought out by calling it a quiescence pattern, Q^p, stressing the pattern of the act. The final goal is a distinct act and usually a pleasant one. It is not a mere quiescence, or Q.

The principal distinct factors in a positive purpose or *appetition* are, then, impulse (I), anticipatory set (A^n), goal object (O^g), and quiescence pattern (Q^p). With these terms defined, the complete structure of the geologist's purposive act of looking for water by climbing the ridge can now be diagrammed as shown in the figure on page 20.

We will find this diagram very useful in resolving many psychological issues concerning the motives, intentions, and aims of moral conduct which arise at numerous places in the field of ethics. It will pay to spend time on this purposive structure now.

Let us once more compare the purposive structure with the chain reflex structure. There is one element of similarity be-

tween the two that must be emphasized. This is the demand which each reflex link in the chain makes for the link that follows and particularly the demand that the initiating hormone need makes for the completion of the whole chain. If at the end of one reflex link the stimulus for the succeeding link does not appear, the first act is repeated over and over. Moreover the original hormone need keeps its dynamic pressure upon the whole chain of acts till the final act of the chain is completed.



Now conceive a chain reflex structure broken just after the first reflex link set off by the hormone need. The digger wasp makes a hole and there it yawns empty with the wasp's intense hormone need calling for something to fill it in a specific way. Conceive, too, that the terminal reflexes of the chain also persist, calling for the terminal act of laying eggs in a special sort of body within the hole. But between the initial pattern of reflex actions and the terminal pattern of reflex actions is an unfilled gap of acts that have to be performed in order to make the bridge from the impulse to the terminal goal act that will bring the hormone need and drive to quiescence. Here we have the general structure of a purposive act exactly as described at the beginning of this analysis—namely, drive-gap-goal.

A purposive goal-seeking act may thus be conceived of as a broken-down chain reflex. The initial reflexes left intact now constitute the drive of the purpose, the terminal reflexes also

left intact constitute the final consummatory goal, and vestiges of some of the intermediate reflexes may even remain. In fact, these various leftover reflexes have been identified in physiological and psychological descriptions with some basic kinds of docile purposive behavior and have received the name of *innate readinesses*. So, in the geologist's thirst activity there are the initial characteristic feelings and reactions which we call being thirsty, and once water is in the mouth, the terminal series of consummatory acts of swallowing and absorbing the water into the system go automatically into action. The pattern of innate readinesses for the consummatory act of the hunger drive is even more conspicuous and includes biting, chewing, salivating, as well as swallowing. And there seem to be vestiges of links of ancient reflexes even among the instrumental acts of grasping food and carrying it to the mouth.

This viewing of purposive behavior as broken-down chain reflex behavior is illuminating in a number of ways, but especially so because it removes the mystery that sometimes attaches to purposive action. It amalgamates human action and ethical conduct into the body of natural occurrences. Human action is still as remarkable as ever, but it is not something to be thought of as separated from the rest of nature. It is a certain line of culmination of natural processes. This view opens the way to admitting some of these other natural processes as possible vital factors in human ethical judgment. It suggests that the mode of study appropriate to ethics, normative as its subject matter must be, may not differ radically from that of other areas of factual study. It suggests specifically that the normative goal of an appetitive purpose, which controls the correctness or incorrectness of all the instrumental acts tried out in attempting to reach the goal, is not so far removed as sometimes imagined from the terminus of an automatic chain reflex performance of an insect, fish, or bird.

At first, the thought of breaking down a beautifully coordinated chain reflex, fully adjusted to an organism's environment, as a step toward a still more effective mode of behavior

adaptation sounds fantastic. What will the poor animal do when the intervening links of the chain are lost? If the gap were left without a compensating means of filling it, the loss would be disastrous. The solution found in the course of natural selection was the substitution of two innate techniques of learning—namely, *trial-and-error* activity and *conditioning*—to provide for the filling of the gap.

Trial-and-error activity consists in principle simply in the organism's capacity at any time a drive is blocked to try at random its whole repertory of responses available for the situation. It differs from the fly's repetitive bumping at the window pane only in the wider variety of acts employed. In fact, the fly's behavior is actually primitive trial and error, because in his bumping he bumps into different places on the window and sometimes he finds an opening and flies out.

For learning, trial-and-error activity is not enough. It must be supplemented by a capacity for conditioning. *Conditioning* means that the successful acts somehow get preferential treatment over the unsuccessful acts. The organism learns to discriminate between the incorrect and the correct trials and to reject the former and retain the latter. The factors for conditioning are numerous and are still being studied. We human beings are so used to learning that we take it for granted. We know that repetition helps, and reward and punishment, and that a very intense experience tends to be remembered in great detail long afterwards. Moreover, a correct trial is automatically rewarded in the achievement of its goal, and the terminal consummatory act of an appetition is generally pleasant. An error is punished by frustration of achievement. Further, added pain or punishment tends to hasten the process of learning. Usually it takes several trials to be sure the correct one was not a coincidence. (And out of this circumstance, one may assume, the whole theory of induction finds its origin.) Up to a certain point the greater the intensity of the drive the more quickly one learns.

Much more detail about conditioning and the learning process could be added. But this is sufficient for the moment. It is suffi-

cient to bring out the presence of a built-in criterion of choice and decision in the very structure of a purposive act.

A Built-in Criterion within a Purposive Structure

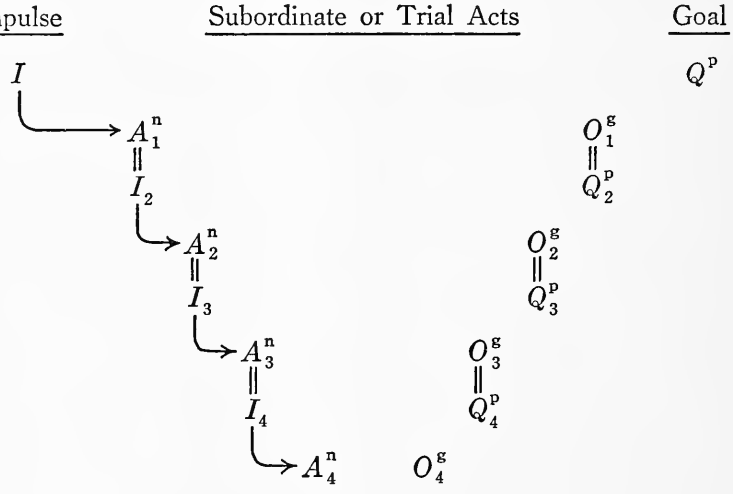
If you examine the diagram of the thirsty geologist's purposive procedure in the pursuit of water, you will see that it consists of a series of subordinate acts built up in tiers. Each act is dependent on the one above it to attain the final governing act of drinking the water that quenches his thirst. The correctness of each act depends on its attaining the goal of the act above it. And the correctness of the whole series depends on its attaining the final goal of satisfying the need for water and the drive generated by that need.

Moreover, a little reflection shows that the dynamics for the whole series—the power that starts it off and keeps it going—is the impulse of the drive to quench the thirst. It is the persistence of this drive that motivates the whole succession of subordinate acts. Again, it will be seen that it is the originating impulse (I) that furnishes the dynamics for each subordinate anticipatory set down to the lowest one at which action may take place. The mere anticipation of water would not stir the geologist if he were not impelled by the thirst drive. The thought of getting a look from the top of the ridge would not attract him then if he didn't think it would show him where water was. The idea of the long climb up the ridge would have been distasteful to him except for the thought that it would give him the view he wanted from the top. Remove the thirst drive, and the whole series of anticipations would drop from the geologist's mind. He would not even have thought of them. The dynamics of the thirst drive moves step by step through all these anticipatory sets till it reaches a set where the geologist can take action —namely, the anticipation that if he starts walking up the slope from where he is standing, he will get the view over the country he wants.

Now, what this means is that each higher anticipatory set

acts as the drive or impulse pattern for each lower or subordinate one. The geologist wants to climb the ridge just then because he wants to get the view at the top, because he wants to see where there is a route to a green patch, because he wants to get to a green patch, because he wants the water to be found there, because finally he is very thirsty and wants to quench his thirst.

Let us show the stages of this dynamic flow of impulse by expanding the earlier diagram thus:



The generating impulse of the thirst drive (I) activates the anticipation and generates the desire for a green patch with water (A^n_1). This drive-charged desire then gives its impulse (I_2) to the anticipation for a route to such a green patch (A^n_2) making that a drive-charged desire, which in turn gives impulse (I_3) and creates a desire for an extensive view showing such a route (A^n_3), and this drive in its turn gives its impulse (I_4) and creates a desire to climb up and get that view (A^n_4). Since

this last subordinate desire can be put into action from where the geoloist is standing, he promptly starts up the slope.

Now let us follow up the other side of the diagram. We see how the energy flows down step by step from anticipation to anticipation, like a stream falling over successive shelves of rock with a pool of gathering energy at each shelf pushing the stream forward over the falls to the next shelf below. Now let us see how these successive impulses are brought to quiescence. How are these successive desires satisfied? Clearly a lower level desire is satisfied if the attainment of its goal object brings about the attainment of the goal object at the level just above. The desire for a means is satisfied if the means produces its end. If the anticipated means fails, the desire is unsatisfied and another means is sought. If the route selected by the geologist to reach the top of the ridge proves to be a bad one—if half way up the geologist finds a cliff before him which he had not noticed when he started—then his desire for this means to reach the top is frustrated. He will promptly drop this route as a wrong one. And observe that he loses all interest and drive for this route. The flow of energy to follow this particular route ceases completely. The route loses all its value and the very idea of taking it is rejected. The geologist selects another route, another $A^n{}_4$, which is now activated by the flow of energy from $A^n{}_3$. To climb the new $A^n{}_4$ route up the ridge will now become the geologist's desire, and his desire will be satisfied when he reaches the top and gains the view he wanted. Do you see what this signifies? It means that the attainment of the view, which is the goal object ($O^g{}_3$) of the next higher level desire ($A^n{}_3$), constitutes the quiescence pattern for the desire below ($A^n{}_4$). There is no more need for a route up the ridge, for he has now got the view for which he needed the route. The same thing happens at the next level up and the next, until the ultimate quiescence pattern of the originating thirst drive is attained. Then the purpose comes to an end, having been consummated and its drive satisfied.

The really significant point about this purposive structure

is that each higher level in the structure acts as a *criterion* for right and wrong decisions in the level below, and the highest level is the over-all criterion for the correctness of all the decisions made at the lower levels. Here is a built-in criterion for right and wrong in the very structure of a purposive act. Here is a natural norm that emerges wherever men or animals exhibit purposive behavior and have the capacity to learn the correct act as against the incorrect, the right from the wrong, in the attainment of a purposive goal. And I believe I shall be able to show in the chapters ahead that the criteria developed as the central norms of ethical judgment by the great traditional schools of ethics are all of this general kind. They emerge from the dynamics of individual and social human action and justify themselves by the structure of their dynamic action.

But let us look a little more closely and see just how the selective action takes place in a purposive structure and how it comes to be normative, how it develops a criterion for judgments of right and wrong.

Selective action comes about first as a result of the gap that develops in purposive behavior between the impulse pattern or drive and the quiescence pattern or consummatory goal. Trial acts are required to bridge the gap. The impulse to make the trials comes obviously from the drive. The determination of the correct as against the incorrect trials also comes from the drive but in the form of a dispositional property of the drive—namely, its conditions of quiescence, or its persistent demand for the consummatory act (Q^p). The correct act is certified finally by the actual attainment of the quiescence pattern or consummatory goal of the drive. This act is taken up and incorporated into the purposive structure toward its fulfillment. The innate trial-and-error technique of learning is required to furnish a wide variety of trials to bridge the gap, and the operation of conditioning is needed to fixate the correct acts for bridging the gap once they have been found and to consolidate them into a learned habit or a set of associations not easily forgotten.

The distinguishing characteristic of a natural norm like this is its *split dynamics*. By the nature of a purposive structure, the dynamics of the drive splits between its aim for its terminal goal and that for the subordinate goal of an anticipatory set. Since it is the identical drive that activates both aims, and the subordinate aim of the trial is activated only on the expectation that its goal will produce the terminal goal of the drive, the sanctioning of the subordinate act depends on that act's leading as anticipated to the terminal goal. If it fails, the dynamics of the drive is automatically withdrawn. In short, *the subordinate trial act is dynamically responsible to the superordinate governing drive and its goal*. This is so because the drive for the trial act comes entirely from the governing drive which is split off and channeled through the trial act in the expectation that this will lead to the terminal goal. The same split dynamics runs right on down through all the steps required for a purposive action.[3]

Whenever a natural norm is developed by a structure with a split dynamics capable of selecting right and wrong trials, as an appetitive purpose does, we shall call such a structure a *selective system*. Since we shall have a lot to say about such selective systems in the chapters ahead, it will be well at this time to offer a careful definition of the concept that will cover any such system we may encounter in the sequel:

[3] The reason the operation of the split dynamics of a purposive act has not been more widely noticed is that people have customarily put their attention on the discoverable causal relationships of the goal objects rather than on the dynamics of the act charging the anticipatory sets. Instead of noticing the dynamic flow of the drive through the anticipatory sets and seeing that the essential connection of means to ends lies in the activation of anticipatory sets by the drive, most people have concerned themselves with the description of the causal connections among the goal objects and assumed that the connection of means to end was purely causal. There would be no place for dynamic corrective selection in a description of the causal relations among goal objects. And if causal relations are equated with correlations, then all dynamic agency goes out of them anyway. To understand the normative selectivity of purposive action and its split dynamics, the student should keep his eye mainly on the left hand side of our diagram rather than on the right hand side.

A selective system is a structural process by which a unitary dynamic agency is channeled in such a way that it generates particular acts, dispositions, or objects (to be called "trials"), and also activates a specific selective agency (to be called the "norm") by which some of the trials are rejected and others are incorporated into the dynamic operation of the system.

This rather forbidding definition will become clearer, both in its meaning and its importance, as later we describe in sequence the great norms that have guided human conduct and have been lifted out as the pivotal concepts of traditional ethical theories. It will be the thesis of this book that none of these selective systems or natural norms of conduct can be safely ignored, and that the selective dynamics of these systems as they work in relation to each other shows when one of them may be expected to be dominant and when another. But for the present, it is sufficient to see the way in which a goal-seeking purpose is in its very dynamics a selective system and a natural norm. There is no better or simpler illustration of the operation of a selective system. About half of human conduct is made up of such positive goal-seeking purposes.

The Structure of a Negative Purpose or Aversion

There is, however, another kind of purpose besides the goal-seeking kind, and this makes up the other half of human conduct. This other kind is the negative purpose fitted for getting away from something instead of getting to something. It is known as *aversion.*

The simplest sort of aversion is a riddance reaction, like that to a burn or a prick or a sting. This reaction is only a little more complex than a primitive reflex. If your hand hits the thorn of a rosebush, you quickly pull it away. If in lighting a cigarette the flame burns your finger, you immediately blow out the match or drop it. It is a reaction to get rid of the hurtful stimulus. That these reactions are purposeful and a little above the primitive reflex is shown by the fact that though the avoidance reaction is

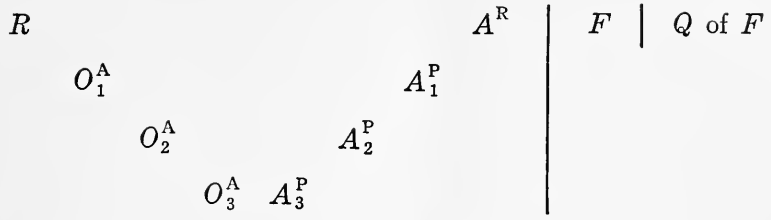
automatic, it is not always the same response. You may either drop the match or blow it out. You may remove your hand from the rose thorn by pulling it up, down, or back depending on the position of your hand among the branches of the rosebush. You have a choice usually among a number of quick responses, and even though you do not think about it, it is likely to be an effective choice.

Now in a riddance reaction the purpose is not to attain a specific goal, but to get away from a specific hurt. The reaction stops as soon as the response gets you away from the hurting object. The terminus of the purposive act is the mere quiescence of the hurt, Q. It is not a specific consummatory reaction like the drinking of water for the thirsty geologist, not a quiescence pattern, Q^p, but mere quiescence, Q, of the hurt. The difference becomes clearer when it is stressed that the quiescence pattern of a positive purpose is generally pleasant, such as the drinking of water when you are thirsty. But the quiescence of a negative purpose is simply the ceasing of the pain or unpleasantness of the object of riddance. Actually, it is this difference in the type of ending of a purposive act that most clearly determines whether the purpose is a positive or a negative one, whether it is an appetition or an aversion. If it ends with a specific and usually pleasant quiescence pattern, it is an appetition. This terminal act is what the person was aiming *for*. If it ends with the mere quiescence of an act of avoidance, it is an aversion. The object of riddance, generally unpleasant, is what the person was getting away *from*.

But a much more interesting, and ethically important, kind of aversion than simple riddance is the apprehensive aversion. Suppose the geologist, as he was climbing the ridge, came upon a rattlesnake coiled by a rock. He would jump back frightened. This is not a simple riddance reaction. The rattlesnake had not hurt him at all. The motivating drive for his avoidance reaction was not an actual hurt but fear. It was fear based on the idea that he would be hurt if he came near enough for the snake to strike. To make this example complete, let us say that the geolo-

gist once was bitten by a rattlesnake and nearly died of the bite. He would then have every reason to be thoroughly scared of a rattlesnake bite. Most of us have learned to be scared of rattlesnakes by the stories we have heard of how dangerous they are. We have good reason, to be sure, to believe that these stories are true. But let us say the geologist had had the ultimate verification of their truth by once having actually been bitten. As an intelligent man, one such intense experience is enough for him to learn never to let himself be bitten again. The original experience of being bitten was, of course, a long drawn out riddance reaction in a period of severe sickness. The purposive aversion that developed out of that experience was a disposition to avoid anything hereafter that would put him in danger of being struck by a rattlesnake again.

His motivating drive now is an ultimate fear of any rattlesnake bite and fear also of anything that he believed would put him in danger for such a bite. In short, he will have acquired a fear not only of the bite, but of the appearance of a rattlesnake in his vicinity, and of the rattle of a rattlesnake even if he does not see it, and of the rock piles which rattlesnakes are likely to inhabit. These latter things that he has become afraid of are, of course, based on his hypotheses that they could, if not avoided, put him in danger of being bitten again. And these hypotheses operate in the geologist's apprehensive aversion of the rattlesnake in much the same way that other hypotheses operated in the geologist's anticipatory appetition in search of water to drink. Since we called the latter hypotheses anticipatory sets and symbolized them as A^n, let us call these apprehensive hypotheses, apprehensive sets and symbolize them as A^P, and symbolize the objects referred to by these sets as O^A (object of apprehension). We can symbolize the original riddance reaction as R, and the apprehensive set referring to R as A^R. And we can symbolize the motivating drive or dynamic agent for the apprehensive aversion as F, meaning the fear or fright reaction. With these symbols we can now diagram the structure of an apprehensive aversion as follows:



A^R = apprehensive set for snake bite R
$A^P{}_1$ = apprehensive set for near-by sight of snake $O^A{}_1$
$A^P{}_2$ = apprehensive set for rattle of snake $O^A{}_2$
$A^P{}_3$ = apprehensive set for likely habitation of snake $O^A{}_3$
F = fear reaction
Q of F = quiescence of fear reaction

In our imagined example the geologist jumped back (F) at the sight of the rattlesnake in his vicinity ($O^A{}_1$, $A^P{}_1$) because of his fear (F) of being bitten (A^R). Having got safely out of range (Q of very intense F for near-by snake), the geologist, we may surmise, then made a wide circuit around the rockpile which he believed to be a likely habitation for other such snakes. In this act of aversion, he kept well away (F) from the rockpile because he feared it was a likely habitation for rattlesnakes ($A^P{}_3$, $O^A{}_3$), where he feared he might hear a snake rattle ($A^P{}_2$), which he feared might lead him to see a snake in his vicinity ($A^P{}_1$), which near-by snake he feared might strike him (A^R). Having got around the rockpile (Q of F), he would pursue his way up the ridge, much relieved.

If the structures of the opposite kinds of purposes, the appetitive and the aversive, are compared, it is clear from the diagrams that the whole function and operation of the positive, or appetitive, purpose is by means of its succession of anticipatory sets to guide a person to his goal, while the whole function and operation of the negative, or aversive, purpose is to shield and keep a person away from a threatening harm. The succession of

apprehensive sets is designed to keep a person further and further out of the way of danger. The succession of anticipatory sets is designed to bring a person closer and closer to a finally achieved consummatory goal.

One ethically important matter to notice in this contrast is that in the very nature of an appetition every anticipatory set is tested for the truth of the belief a person has in it—to the effect that it does lead to the desired goal. But in the very structure of an apprehensive aversion, the truth of the apprehensive sets is only tested by chance and often never tested at all. Since the very function of an apprehensive set is to keep a person away from the ultimately apprehended hurt, the truth of the apprehensive hypothesis is never necessarily tested. Perhaps there were no snakes in the rockpile the geologist avoided. Perhaps rattlesnakes do not inhabit rockpiles. By always avoiding rockpiles in the desert, the geologist would never test the truth of his apprehension.

This is the reason, of course, that many superstitions persist. At one time children were taught that if they ate cherries after a glass of milk, they would get deathly sick. Naturally, for generations the hypothesis was never tested. So a man's culture can become permeated with unjustified fears. Unless they are deliberately and systematically tested for the sake of finding out if they are true, they may persist for generations on end.

One more important observation about the operation of an apprehensive aversion. In our illustration, the geologist avoided the snake by a fear reaction. Another way to avoid the snake would have been to kill it. This would have been an aggressive reaction motivated by hate rather than fear. It would have had the same ultimate result of ridding the geologist of the danger of being hurt. Fear and hate, or, in other words, fright and aggression, are opposites in one sense. They are opposite ways of getting rid of something obnoxious. If the object is not so dangerous that there is a good chance of getting rid of it by aggression, this is the generally appropriate way of acting upon it. So, we generally kill mosquitoes. If it is so dangerous that a

person is more likely to get hurt than to dispose of the object, the fear reaction is the more appropriate. So we generally avoid a hornet's nest.

But in a deeper sense, the two ways of getting rid of troublesome objects are closely alike, so much so that some writers regard them as the same basic drive but with opposite modes of action depending, as just pointed out, on the nature of the situation in relation to the resources of the person. In a dubious and intense situation a person will find himself shifting from fright to aggression and back as circumstances change, the deep emotional feel remaining unaltered except for the superficial effects induced by actions of attack rather than flight. Moreover, a typical stimulus for both is some serious blockage of an on-going purpose. Fear and aggression are not, except under special conditions, original instigating motives for purposive action—as riddance reactions are, and as are all positive drives like thirst, hunger, sex, curiosity, ambition, group loyalty and the like. Usually some state of frustration calls them out. For these reasons, it is not unlikely that they are simply two phases of one drive, whose essential function it is to reinforce other drives that have become obstructed, and to inject into these their large reserve energies for biological benefit or for the actual survival of the organism. Because of this function they may be called *injectives*. And in the diagram for the apprehensive aversion it would be more accurate to put *J* for injective in place of *F* (fear) as the motivating agent. For aggression is as likely as fear to be the activating motive in such an aversive purpose.

The apprehensive aversion is clearly a selective system as well as the anticipatory appetition. It is built up as a result of learning. Trial and error is employed to find the right act for getting away from something as definitely as for getting to something. An act that fails to get one away is rejected as wrong and the dynamics that went into it is withdrawn. The successful act is learned by conditioning and incorporated into the selective system. There are levels of apprehensive sets dependent on one another in a certain order like the levels of anticipatory sets in

an appetition. And the governing dynamic act of the whole series is a terminal act of hurt and a primitive riddance reaction that functions in an apprehensive aversion in much the same way a consummatory quiescence pattern functions in an appetition. In an aversion, however, the pivotal act is usually painful, and that is what generates the avoidance structure and the negative aim of the purpose. In an appetition the consummatory goal is generally pleasant, and this adds a special tone of positivity beyond the goal-seeking structure of the system.

Conclusion

The bearing of this analysis of purposive action on ethical problems can now be plainly seen. It is not only that purposive action is that voluntary action which ultimately comes up for judgment by ethical criteria and so is the pivotal subject matter of ethics, but also that here in the structure of a purposive act we meet with a compelling natural norm in action. Here is a criterion correcting acts of conduct immediately on our door step. By our working definition of ethics it is a genuine ethical criterion, though a modest one, for it selects good acts from bad within its limited domain.

A purposive structure illustrates in a complete and simple way the principle of what we called a selective system. Here we observe the characteristic split dynamics of such a system. The same impulse that demands the fulfillment of the norm (in purposive action, the reduction of the drive) likewise motivates the trial (the instrumental act) for the fulfillment of the norm. The trial may be in error. If so, the impulse of the norm motivating the trial rejects it and persists until a correct trial act is performed. We see clearly here what is meant by the dynamic *sanctioning* of an act, the corrective force that guides the selection of the right act from the wrong.

Purposive structure is a simple model of a selective system. It will serve us in recognizing other selective systems, or natural norms, as we encounter them in the pages ahead.

This analysis of purposive behavior will also serve us in straightening out questions of motivation and intention and aims that have confused many issues in ethics, and it will be of assistance in the next chapter towards clarifying the free will problem in its relation to ethics.

There is no better introduction to the normative science of ethics than a study of the normative operation of man's purposive acts.

CHAPTER 3

THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

The Sources of the Problem

THE ANALYSIS of conduct, or purposive action, given in the previous chapter, will immediately be found useful in dealing with the problem of freedom in ethics. This problem quite properly comes up early in the study of ethics, because the subject matter of ethics is actions of choice and the criteria for better or worse choices. How can a man be thought of as making a choice, unless it is his own voluntary action and unless he is free to make it?

This problem has entered so deeply into the common thought of modern man that he probably does not even notice anything strange in introducing the topic as a problem. But on second thought why should there be any problem about it? Clearly we do make choices and sometimes they turn out bad, and we want to learn how to avoid making bad choices again. And we should like to know the criteria for good choices so as never to make bad choices if we can possibly help it. What more is there to it? Actually, this is just about the conclusion I believe we shall reach. But there is no question that freedom of choice has figured as a big problem in the history of ethics, and it would be a mistake not to give it considerable attention.

The problem arose with particular severity in the Middle Ages in connection with a theological problem. God was con-

ceived as an omniscient, omnipotent, and perfect being. If he is omniscent then He must know every least action that has occurred, is occurring, or ever will occur. It follows that God knows every action every man will perform. But if God knows every future action a person will perform, then actually the person has no choice in what he will do. So man has no free choice. More than that, man never had free choice in his past actions. How then can God punish a man for his past sins, and still be a perfect God? How can God as a perfect benevolent being, and also omnipotent, even permit men to suffer as they do, seeing that men can do nothing about it? If God is omniscient and omnipotent, then he cannot be perfect, thus to allow men to suffer and to punish them for sins they could not help performing. But if it is granted that men do have free choice and so can be justly held responsible for their actions, then God cannot be omniscient nor omnipotent.

From medieval scholastic philosophy, this problem was inherited but took a different form in the scientific developments that followed. With the phenomenal growth of scientific observation and experiment, and with theory rationalizing these results in astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology, man was impressed with the extent and precision of the predictive regularities of nature. The inference was inevitable that all natural processes were determined by natural laws. In fact, the theological and scientific tenets were often joined together with the theory that God created an ordered world in the most perfect possible form and this form was manifest in the laws of nature which the scientists were discovering. But even without the aid of theology, the development of scientific theory seemed to lead to the conclusion that nothing happens in nature that is not predictably caused in accordance with the universal laws of nature. And if everything is causally determined, then so must be the acts and choices of men. So, again, how can a man be held responsible when he has no free choice?

The two historical factors that have brought the problem of freedom into major prominence are, then, the theological con-

flicts connected with the attributes of God and the recent development of natural science with its inferred presumption of universal causal determinism. These two factors have their major ethical impact on the individual by converging on the question of moral responsibility. And this question looks two ways. It asks, on the one side, how can a person be held responsible for an act which it was necessitated he make, whether by the omniscience of God or by the universality of natural law? Unless there is an area of unpredictability and indeterminism in human action, so that a person has a real choice and always might have chosen differently, he cannot be held responsible for the action performed. But, on the other side, the question of moral responsibility asks how can a person be considered responsible whose character cannot be relied upon and his actions predicted? Unless a person's character can be molded and determined by his bringing up and his education, and the results depended upon, he is not a responsible person nor one who can be effectively corrected for his wrongdoing.

Certain Ambiguities Cleared Up

There are certain ambiguities in the use of the terms *freedom* and *law* that often muddy the problem. These need only to be pointed out to be avoided.

In political and other social spheres, *freedom* refers to the absence of social compulsion. If there is no law forbidding an action or any well-recognized custom regulating it, then a person is socially free to perform it. Before a traffic signal is put up at an intersection, a person is free to go through at any time with only the customary restrictions on safe driving. As soon as a traffic signal is erected, however, he is only free to go through on a green light. Yet a person may in spite of the law *choose* to go through on a red light, taking his chances with the police. Thus his freedom of choice was not *determined* by the traffic regulation, though he was subject to social compulsion to obey it. And if a police officer catches him, he may in fact make

the driver back up and obey the law. But clearly social compulsion is very different in its operation from natural determinism. Whether man's actions are determined or not, some of his actions in a society will be subject to social compulsion and so not be free in that sense, and others will be socially free. Let us reserve the term *compulsion* for social restraint and *freedom from compulsion* will mean absence of social restraint. The problem of freedom we are now discussing has nothing to do with freedom in the social context.

The problem of freedom arises not over social compulsion but over the question of whether human actions are wholly causally determined or not. This latter is the question of determinism versus indeterminism, often referred to as the question of free will. To avoid ambiguity, let us distinguish:

freedom from social compulsion	vs.	compulsion (by social law)
indeterminism (free will)	vs.	determinism (by natural law)

The ambiguity regarding freedom also crops up regarding law. For both social compulsion and determinism have to do with the application of law. A social law, however, is man made; it remains in force even when exceptions occur in the form of disobedience; and so it does not deny free will. It is prescriptive.

A natural law, by contrast, is discovered through observation and is not man made. It is regarded as a regularity of nature operating without exception. A human formulation of a natural law may, of course, be in error, and then there would appear observations that were exceptions to that formulation. But in this event the descriptive formulation would be changed so as to conform to the data and do away with the exceptions. Clearly, a natural law regarded as a regularity without any exceptions does deny free will. And the formulation of it is not prescriptive but purely descriptive.

A typical example of a natural law is the law of acceleration of a falling body. If a man slips off a roof, his time of fall from

the moment he leaves the roof until he reaches the ground can be determined by the formula $S = \frac{1}{2}gt^2$. This formula has frequently been tested with the observations and is reliable in its predictions. If the observations did not conform with the predictions, the equation would be changed. Sometimes such equations are spoken of as scientific laws (still another source of ambiguity for the term *law*). The equation is not itself the natural law or regularity described, but simply the expression of it in suitable symbols.

The problem of freedom in its present-day impact on ethics has to do with the question of natural determinism versus indeterminism. What are the arguments for each? When these arguments are examined, are the issues involved relevant to the study of conduct and its criteria, and, if so, to what extent?

Some writers have sought to reduce the problem to that of predictability. This appears, however, to be only a halfway step toward the solution. There is no question, in the light of the predictive powers of the various sciences, that a large and increasing area of human experience is subject to predictive control. It is equally obvious that a great deal of human experience is not yet open to prediction. Moreover, there are wide variations in the degree of precision or determinateness with which predictions can be made. In terms of determinate predictability, there is a very wide range of indeterminism. But this fact is not decisive, nor one to give great comfort to a man who desires convincing evidence for a sphere of indeterminism open for the choices of a genuinely free will. The ultimate question of determinism versus indeterminism is whether those regularities of nature which scientific formulae and predictions refer to and describe are so pervasive as to eliminate areas of causally undetermined, alternatively possible events in nature. Such open choice events in nature would be unpredictable not because of a gap in human knowledge but because there is nothing, which could be described, determinative of these events.

Here lies the real issue of this problem in connection with the

history of ethics. Let us now review the main arguments pro and con.

Main Arguments for and against Determinism in Nature

The Main Arguments for Determinism

1. Reliable prediction can be accounted for only on grounds of regularities in nature. To the extent that predictions are confirmed, the inference that natural events are determined is justified. From earliest times men have been able to rely on predictions having to do with their techniques of living—hunting, agriculture, animal husbandry, navigation. With the development of civilization this knowledge has steadily increased, and within the last three hundred years the increase in the range and precision of reliable prediction has been phenomenal—in astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology. There is no reason to think this progress in predictive knowledge will cease. Judging from the past, there is strong evidence that it will continue. Extrapolating from the evidences of the past, we find the inference strong that all events are determined in nature. Where man cannot predict, he is simply ignorant of the regularities in operation. This is the usual assumption of the experimental scientist and it has been repeatedly rewarded with success. If an experiment intended to isolate some anticipated correlation fails, the failure is set down to an error of the experimenter, who develops another hypothesis as to the correlation in question, and he generally finds what it is in the end. The history of human practical and scientific techniques of prediction is the strongest evidence, and constantly getting stronger, for the hypothesis that all natural events are completely determined.

2. It is extremely difficult to make out what could be meant by an undetermined event. It is doubtful if a clear statement of the concept of indeterminism can be made. Only as long as the

idea of indeterminism is kept vague and undefined, except negatively as something that is not determinism, is it plausible. Try to make the notion clear and positive, and it melts away. An hypothesis that cannot be stated in clear and positive terms is questionable. It cannot be verified.

The Main Arguments for Indeterminism

1. Everyone has the immediate feeling of his ability to make a free choice. I can pick up the pencil before me, or not, as I choose. On entering a bookstore with ten dollars, a Christmas gift for the purchase of books, I can buy any book I want within the price; or I can go out without buying. This feeling is an immediate datum, as ultimate as a feeling of pleasure or of warmth on my skin. In this feeling I have a direct and incorrigible intuition that within obvious physical limits (such as the pencil being in my reach and having ten dollars in my pocket) my act of choice is undetermined.

2. Though there are large areas of regularity in nature where events can be properly inferred as determined, there are other large areas where events are not predictable. For practical reasons we are particularly aware of the regularities of nature, for by them we control events for our purposes. We do not notice or pay much attention to the myriad little occurrences that go on between the regularities we do notice. Typically we have no names for these unique novelties of experience. Only in two areas do these unique occurrences get trapped and recorded and named.

One of these areas is history. For history is the record of actual occurrences of the past, and historians are notoriously skeptical about historical laws. A past event is never repeated. Many strands in an historical event are on the evidence determined by earlier events, but the total event is unpredictable and is so because of the free choices of many men which contributed to the peculiar character of that one event.

The other area where unique occurrences are trapped and in a way preserved for human observation is that of the creative

works of man. A great work of art is a unique creation of imagination and of free human decision. The difference is marked between an imitative academic work and a genuine imaginative creation, like a sonnet of Keats or Milton or a portrait by Titian or Clouet. The treasuring of such works for their rarity is the strongest evidence that they contain something that is unrepeatable, unpredictable, and undetermined. Of course, much in any artist's work can be shown to have been influenced by contemporary factors. But these influences were selected by the discriminating free choice of the artist to produce something unpredictable. The central creative core of the work was the free imaginative choice of the artist and was undetermined.

3. Without free will in the sense of the undetermined capacity of a person to choose which action he will perform among alternative actions open to him, how can the person be held responsible for the action he chooses? The recognized fact of moral responsibility is strong evidence for the indeterminism of human choice.

As a corollary to this argument, it is pointed out that punishment for a wrong choice would be unjustifiable if a person had been determined in the choice he made and so could not have done otherwise. Likewise remorse would be irrational.

4. A recent argument for indeterminism comes from the Heisenberg Principle of Indeterminacy in physics. According to this principle it is impossible under certain conditions to gain information about both the position of an electron and its velocity and direction. Thus physics strikes among its basic subatomic configurations areas of indeterminacy. Hence universal determinism is ruled out.

Deterministic Replies to the Arguments for Indeterminism

1. As regards the feeling of free choice, this does not imply indeterminism, but only the obvious fact that the response of the person himself was based on his character and preferences and his deliberation over alternatives was indeed his own response. The final response would nonetheless have been determined by

his character, preferences, and deliberation, which in turn were determined by conditions of his environment past and present.

2. As for the argument for nameless novelties in experience, this depends only on the fact that there are gaps in the evidence for determinism. From mere absence of evidence, nothing follows.

As for the uniqueness of historical events, this may be admitted consistently with determinism. A complex configuration of elements every one of which is determined can still be unique, and its unique structure could theoretically be predicted. Practically, however, it must be admitted that the more complex an event the more difficult to predict it. But this fact is irrelevant to the thesis that the event is nonetheless determined. The same holds of the alleged indeterminacy of creative productions. Their complexity renders their prediction practically impossible, but this is irrelevant to the theoretical probability that they are determined throughout. Again, as in the feeling of free choice argument, this probability of determinism does not remove any of the actuality of achievement on the part of the artist. It was he who made the work and none other, and, because it was he, the glory is justly his for the achievement.

3. As for the moral responsibility argument, this plays directly into the hands of the determinist. Only if an act can be shown to be determined by the character of a person, can the person be held responsible for performing it. If the act was not determined by the person's character, it could have been anything at all, totally inconsistent with his character, and unanticipated by the person. He might want to shake hands with an acquaintance and find himself slapping his face. This is the sort of thing certain neurotic individuals do. But with these latter we expect to find the acts determined by some inhibited portions of the sick man's personality. But in the indeterminist view, these acts might happen with a normal person and no deterministic explanation would be possible. With the indeterminist view, there would be no reliable connection between a man's acts and his character, and so no grounds for holding him responsible for

his acts. As for punishment, the principal justification for that is to change the man's character so that he will learn to do better and become more reliable. Remorse is a sort of self punishment and useful for the same reason. Both acquire their significance through an assumption of determinism.

4. The Heisenberg Principle does not establish an area of indeterminacy in physics, but only one in which direct evidence from verification of precise prediction is in principle impossible. The reason for this is moreover well understood. It is that the means of observation interferes with what is being observed. When electron beams are directed upon an electron to observe where it is, the beam interferes with the location or velocity of the electron being observed. The electron under observation is theoretically as determined in its position, velocity, and direction as the molecules of a gas. This example merely reinforces the point earlier made that determinism cannot be identified with predictability. And the issue under discussion is between determinism and its contrary, not between prediction or the impossibility of prediction.

Indeterminist Replies to the Arguments for Determinism

1. The argument for determinism on the basis of past successes in prediction does not prove determinism. It only records an historical progress that may be expected to go as far as regularities do go in the processes of nature. It does not demonstrate universal determinism. Actually the thesis is unprovable because it refers to the character of all events whatsoever, and the evidence for the causal determination of all events will never be completely available.

2. As for the point that indeterminist concepts are vague and negative, the general reply is that lack of clarity and precision in one view does not establish the truth or superiority of a contrary view. Disposing of an opponent's argument does not establish your own. However, if that kind of aspersion is persuasive, it should be observed that the determinist is not very clear himself as to what is meant by natural law and causation, which are

inferred from the successes in prediction and on which the doctrine of determinism is based.

But, more to the point, indeterminism is not a negative doctrine, but a highly positive one. It bases its evidence on the immediate intuitions of human acts of free choice, on the practice of history, and on creative activity wherever it emerges in man's works of invention and art.

Conclusion—The Ethical Irrelevancy of Indeterminism

In my opinion the arguments on present evidence are fairly evenly balanced. The strongest positive argument for determinism is the spectacular advances in man's powers of prediction and control of nature from which he infers that all natural events are completely determined relative to one another. The strongest positive argument for indeterminism is the creative imagination of the man of genius and the emergence of novel occurrences that transform the history of man and perhaps the evolutionary history of life and even of inorganic forms.

I have gone into these arguments in some detail because in the history of ethics so many writers have put such store by the issue. But actually in view of our analysis of purposive behavior in the previous chapter, the issue seems to be irrelevant to the fact of man's power to choose between alternative courses of action and his responsibility for his choices. The issue has its own intrinsic interest and in certain ultimate considerations of policy could make a difference in a man's decision. But it makes no difference to the verifiable fact that a man in his purposive acts does make choices and decisions, that these may be in error, and that he comes to be much concerned to discover the criteria for correct as against incorrect choices so as to minimize his mistakes. This observation of itself justifies the detailed description of exactly what goes on in purposive action and its contrast with automatic chain reflex behavior.

The supposed importance of the free will argument for inde-

terminism is to establish the existence of a field of responsible human choices, a field of conduct. For since we have defined ethics as the study of the criteria for distinguishing good and bad conduct, then if it were shown that actually there cannot be any human acts of the sort described as conduct, it follows that there is no subject matter for ethics. So, many moralists have been at great pains to defend some form of indeterminism so as to insure the existence of the subject matter of their study.

The best way to show the irrelevance of indeterminism to human acts of choice or conduct is to follow through the detailed description of a purposive act involving choice, giving it a strict deterministic interpretation. For it will then come out clearly that a strict deterministic interpretation of a purposive act in no way eliminates the presence of an act of choice or of criteria for the correctness of the choice or of the responsibility of the person for the choice he makes. The subject matter of ethics remains intact even under the presupposition of a strict determinism.

Let us return once more to the purposive activity of the thirsty geologist, and let us give each articulation of his behavior a deterministic interpretation. The activity was initiated by the emergence of a thirst drive. The evidence here is very strong that this drive is completely determined by the physio-chemical processes of dehydration in a physiological organism endowed by heredity with a pattern of impulse specific to this condition. The tendency to trial-and-error activity would be likewise explained by heredity and also the learning capacity of conditioning. The anticipation of water as the goal object to reduce this drive is determined by past conditioning when the geologist learned the satisfying effects of water upon the demands of thirst. The anticipation of finding water in a green patch is likewise determined by previous learning, and so with the succession of other anticipations. When this succession of anticipations reaches one upon which the geologist can act, he is immediately impelled to action by the agency of the thirst drive. The act is determined by the drive directed along the channels of the suc-

cessive anticipations. Everything so far is described as determined.

At the same time, the selection of anticipatory sets, the act of starting up the slope, and the succeeding acts as he proceeds toward his final achievement are all acts of choice. They are acts of choice because any one of them may be in error and, if so, will stimulate the geologist to substitute an alternative act and ultimately, if necessary, to start random trial-and-error activity. If the alternative acts are anticipations based on past experience, they are determined by those earlier experiences. If random trial-and-error activity is resorted to, this is determined by the absence of any further learned responses that can be utilized, thus releasing the inherited technique of trial-and-error activity. The criteria for right and wrong acts are determined by the drive-charged anticipatory set and the correctness of their references to the actual situation in which the geologist was placed. His climb up the slope along the route selected is correct if the contours of the actual slope agree with his anticipations and bring him to the top of the ridge. The actual contours referred to are the criterion which determines the correctness of his choice. And finally it is the actual condition of quiescence for the geologist's thirst that determines as a criterion the ultimate correctness of the whole succession of acts carried out on the thirst drive.

Here, then, all the factors in the geologist's complex series of acts are described in strictly deterministic terms, but the integrity of the acts as acts of conduct is nowise affected. Every one of these acts is the geologist's personal choice. There were alternatives that might have been chosen, as comes out clearly when an error is made and one of these rejected alternatives actually is later chosen. The fact that the geologist's past experience determined him to take what he thought was the more probable alternative does not annihilate the rejected alternative, but only delays his taking it till after he finds he has made a wrong choice. Furthermore, and ethically most significant, he is definitely responsible for the wrong act he performed. It was his own act,

initiated by his own impulse, guided by his own ideas and hypotheses, which came out of his own past experience. His mistake was his own doing, resulting from his own inadequate experience perhaps, or perhaps from a habit of over-hasty judgment. His responsibility is further shown by his eagerness to correct the error. Illuminatingly enough, the dynamic sanction behind his eagerness to make the correction, and so indicating his personal responsibility for the act, is the very drive that instigated it. In summary, it is the split dynamics of a purposive structure—its selective system as described in the previous chapter—that accounts for the possibility of the acts being determined throughout and at the same time being genuine acts of choice, with sometimes inevitable errors, subject to correction by built-in criteria which determine the right from the wrong.

Since purposive acts may thus be described as at once determined and also genuine acts of choice with possibilities of error, and since the voluntary acts of conduct with which ethics is centrally concerned are all purposive acts, it is now clear that the subject matter of ethics does not entail indeterminism. Any purposive act is an act of free choice on the part of the person who performs it.

Whether the act was or was not completely determined is a superadded question. It is something like the question whether or not the properties of living matter are completely determined by the chemical properties of inorganic matter, or whether there is not a uniquely novel and chemically undetermined vital property that emerges at that juncture. Possibly there is a little element of indeterminate choice that emerges in every purposive act, or perhaps this emerges in some purposive acts but not others—in, for instance, the creative acts of artists and inventors, including the inventors of new political forms of social relationship.

That purposive acts are very largely determined and subject to personal and social control is not a debatable question. The only question is that of whether or not they are completely determined. This question does seem to be open. But the aim of

the present section has been to show that the subject matter of ethics does not depend upon the solution of that question. Nor, we shall find, do even the main principles of ethics or the significant criteria that evolve have much to do with the question of indeterminism.

Finally, there is a little matter of practical attitude connected with the foregoing issue that is perhaps of something more than casual interest. Many of my readers must have noticed, as I have, in discussions about men and social policy, such as arise in committees of various sorts, that when the discussion is about men outside the committee the attitude assumed is that of social and psychological determinism, but when the discussion is over the judgments of men within the committee the attitude assumed is that of indeterminism.

Suppose it is a committee discussing what to do about cheating in examinations. The matters under discussion will be mainly how by physical means, such as seating arrangements, to reduce the temptation of cheating; or how by fear of detection, such as proctoring, to lessen its likelihood; or how by rewards to build up attitudes of respect for noncheating, through appeals to human dignity, personal respectability, school spirit, and the like. Statistical studies of cheating will be made, and studies of the social relations of students in different groups. The assumption throughout is that cheating is determined by certain factors which in various degrees can be socially or physcially controlled. Any committee member who spoke up to protest that cheating is a free and undetermined voluntary act of each and every individual and not to be treated as a problem in statistics or mechanical devices would be an object for shocked silence—after which the committee would continue its determined way to control the cheating problem.

On the other hand, if any committee member in disagreement with others—say, as to the advisability of a heavy policing of the examination room—began analyzing the motivations of one of his opponents within the committee, if he pointed out the condition of his opponent's childhood under a domineering

mother, the occasions when he resented authority exercised by deans and the President, the left-wing organizations to which he belonged, that would end the committee's work for the afternoon and be grounds for terminating the committee membership of that too objective committee member.

There are appropriate times for assuming the attitude of determinism in social relationships and others for assuming the attitude of indeterminism. This may be some slight evidence for some degree of truth on both sides.

CHAPTER 4

CULTURAL ABSOLUTISM AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Acculturation

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER a person has with criteria regulating conduct is within his own family group. What he meets there are the customs of the society of which his parents are members. Not until a person has had a good deal of time or occasion to reflect and grow critical does he acquire so much as a suspicion that there are other criteria of conduct besides those practiced in his own family and society. The general name now prevalent for this sort of social criterion is cultural pattern.

A cultural pattern is actually a collection of criteria for good conduct, but these are all of a type, and when referring to the type, we shall refer to a cultural pattern as if it were a single ethical criterion. Its characteristic is that it is carried by social tradition and receives its dynamics from the inertia and momentum of tradition founded on human drives. It is a powerful criterion sanctioned by all the social forces that contribute to maintain tradition against change.

A child is born into a cultural pattern and is immediately molded into its form. Even a child's basic impulses are directed to find their satisfactions in the particular modes of his society. His ways of sleeping, eating, toilet training, talking, wearing

clothes, even his occasions for exhibiting emotions and the manner of exhibiting them, are all regulated by the customs of the tribe or the civilization in which he finds himself. Partly by physical coercion, partly by punishment or threats of punishment, or by reward and praise, but largely by imitation and the doing of what is done, the satisfaction of being one of the crowd, the child and soon the adult finds himself embodying in his actions the customs of his group. This process is that of acculturation. Then the individual begins applying the pattern to others as others applied it to him. And so the group carries on and enforces its customs upon all who come into it. The cultural pattern of the group gets embedded into the habits and purposive goals of every individual of the group and functions as an enormously effective criterion of conduct. According to this criterion, conformity to the cultural pattern of the group is right and nonconformity is wrong.

In its functioning a cultural pattern is clearly a selective system with a split dynamics similar to that of a purposive structure, but more complex. To understand its range and its limits, we must describe its mode of operation presently in detail.

But first we must notice how much every one of us accedes to the demands of the cultural pattern of the society he has been brought up in. Look at the clothes we wear, the houses we live in, our manners in our social relations with one another, our family life, how many wives and husbands we have, how we treat our children, our education, our opinions of others and especially of strangers, our conceptions of proper tribal or civilized social organizations—all of these are dictated by our cultural patterns. We have become acculturated to them. And even if we superciliously refer to them as mere conventions and set up a grand resistance to one or another of them, the vast majority of our customs we accept without a thought.

Perhaps you go Bohemian and let your hair grow long and frowsy, eschew a tie, and even wear sandals. But look at the trousers you wear, the cut of the shirt you have on (even if its color is loud), the language you speak, the way you drive your

car in the street and walk on the sidewalk, the money you use, the way you transact business. Your little Bohemian revolt barely scratches the surface of the deep body of customs your society has built into your personality. Besides, perhaps you are merely conforming to the local pattern of the Bohemian group you have recently joined up with, which happens to be a perennial subgroup of most modern civilized societies. One does not easily escape or revolt against the cultural pattern of a society.

The power of a cultural pattern to make its criterion of conduct felt and bring about conformity is easily admitted. But it may be said that it does not touch the big ethical choices. It has to do with manners and dialects and the like, not with matters of ultimate ethical importance. This is highly questionable. The basic ethical presuppositions of a cultural pattern are among the last to be affected in a drastic cultural change. A people's religion, which generally embodies a moral code, is one of the most resistant things to cultural change.

It is even very difficult to be aware of our deep-seated social habits of action and thought and judgment. Just as we are not aware of the air we breathe till it gets so smoky or contaminated that breathing becomes obstructed, so we do not become aware of the standards of our cultural patterns till at some point we find a customary action or judgment blocked. Even then we indignantly call the blocking object *bad* and its action *wrong*, unless the conflict is between two of our accepted customs both of which we have through long habit and acculturation honored and accepted.

It is a conflict within a cultural pattern itself that generally first makes a man aware of his culturally-accepted standards of action and judgment. Otherwise, he accepts his cultural standards and acts in accordance with them as naturally as he accepts the conditions of his physical environment. In fact, he takes his culture to be as natural and as much a part of the cosmic structure of things as the regularities of nature, which he has learned to respect in constructing shelters, building fires, cultivating and irrigating his land, navigating, and fishing in the sea. He has, if

one considers, learned the two sources for the regulation of his behavior in the same way. If he tries to build his hut without adequate supporting beams or makes his mud bricks without sufficient binding material, he finds himself in trouble in just the same way as he does when he tries to marry a girl not among those he is permitted to marry in his culture or eats a meat that is forbidden in his religion. He learns both kinds of restriction through his culture, and even today with all our scientific sophistication, it is not always easy to distinguish between a natural law or correlation and a superstition. For a superstition is nothing other than a supposed natural correlation that is supported solely by convention and is unverified by controlled observation. Primitive man accepts his cultural pattern as of the very nature of things, and civilized man has done the same for ages and is prone to do the same today.

The earliest ethical doctrine, then, in man's history and in his childhood development is that of a primitive cultural absolutism. It is the assumed view that the demands of one's own culture are the ultimate criteria of right and wrong conduct, and that these are in the very nature of things, or at least, not distinguished from the regularities of physical nature or cosmic demands generally. There is likely to be a religious background for cultural absolutism, so that a religious authority sanctions the cultural demands as well as the social process of acculturation.

People who live under the authority of cultural absolutism are not apt to give much thought to the sources or the justification of the criteria of conduct on which they act. If they are questioned, they may say simply that these are the ways of the people, or possibly that these are ways or commandments that were divinely instituted, and perhaps add that it would be sacrilegious to doubt their authority.

One is tempted to assert that there is no ethical theory of cultural absolutism. When it is operative in a society, it is taken for granted, and unquestioned. It is not a theory supported by evidence or by other rational grounds. It is a doctrine, something indoctrinated by the tradition of the group. As soon as there is

enough criticism among members of a social group to lead to ethical justification and theory, the theory that develops is not cultural absolutism but something different. It may be some form of ethical authoritarianism or intuitionism, or it may be cultural relativism. The first two we shall take up later, but the last is the main subject of this chapter. Before we can discuss cultural relativism profitably, however, we need to have a better idea of what a culture is.

Cultural Pattern

A cultural pattern is a set of social habits or dispositions effectively guiding the behavior of a group of people. The term comes into use from the apt title of a book by the anthropologist Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*. No book has been more influential in showing what is meant by cultural differences in various social groups, and how permeating these differences are in determining the attitudes of the people, their ideals, their relations with one another, and their moral criteria of conduct.

She describes in great detail the customs and institutions of three primitive societies, the Zuni Indians of the pueblos of the American Southwest, the Dobuans of Dobu Island off the southern shore of eastern New Guinea, and the Kwakiutl Indians of the northwest coast of America. She chose primitive instead of civilized cultures because they were simpler and could be more fully described in limited space. They are all at about the same level of cultural adjustment. And she chose these particular cultures because they were so completely different from one another. The central attitude of the Zuni culture is one of sobriety and deep concern with religious ritual to insure peace and harmonious unity of man with man, nature, and the gods; that of Dobu culture is one of malignity, suspicion, and constant vigilance against evil; that of the Kwakiutl is one of unbounded ambition, competition, and personal aggrandizement.

Her final characterizations of each of these cultural patterns are as follows:

[The Zuni] do not picture the universe, as we do, as a conflict of good and evil. . . . They do not see the seasons, nor man's life, as a race run by life and death. Life is always present, death is always present. Death is no denial of life. The seasons unroll themselves before us, and man's life also. Their attitude involves no resignation, no subordination of desire to a stronger force, but the sense of man's oneness with the universe. . . . Their version of man's relation to the cosmos gives no place to heroism, and man's will to overcome obstacles. It has no sainthood for those who

Fighting, fighting, fighting
Die driven against the wall.

It has its own virtues and they are singularly consistent. . . . They have made, in one small but long-established cultural island in North America, a civilization whose forms are dictated by the typical choices of the Apollonian, all of whose delight is in formality, and whose way of life is the way of measure and sobriety.

Life in Dobu fosters extreme forms of animosity and malignancy which most societies have minimized by their institutions. Dobuan institutions, on the other hand, exalt them in the highest degree. The Dobuan lives out without repression man's worst nightmares of the ill-will of the universe, and according to his view virtue consists in selecting a victim upon whom he can vent the malignancy he attributes alike to human society and to the powers of nature. All existence appears to him as a cut-throat struggle. . . . Suspicion and cruelty are his trusted weapons in the strife and he gives no mercy, as he asks none.

[For the Kwakiutl,] Triumph was an uninhibited indulgence in delusions of grandeur, and shame a cause of death. . . . The gamut of the emotions, which they recognized, from triumph to shame, was magnified to its utmost proportions. . . . Knowing but one gamut, they used it for every occasion, even the most unlikely. All the rewards of this society were bestowed upon the person who could deal with existence in these terms. Every event, both the acts of one's fellows and the accidents dealt out by the material environment, threatened first and foremost one's ego security, and definite and

specific techniques were provided to reinstate the individual after the blow. If he could not avail himself of these techniques, he had no recourse except to die. . . . The segment of human behavior which the Northwest Coast has marked out to institutionalize in its culture is one which is recognized as abnormal in our civilization, and yet it is sufficiently close to the attitudes of our own culture to be intelligible to us and we have a definite vocabulary with which we may discuss it. The megalomaniac paranoid trend is a definite danger in our society. It faces us with a choice of possible attitudes. One is to brand it as abnormal and reprehensible, and it is the attitude we have chosen in our civilization. The other extreme is to make it the essential attribute of ideal man, and this is the solution in the culture of the Northwest Coast.[1]

From this last quotation, it is obvious that Ruth Benedict would describe a civilized culture like our own in the same detached manner she describes these three primitive cultural patterns. Modern civilized societies too have their own diverse cultural patterns, but, of course, more complex than those of these primitive societies.

Notice the diversity of ethical judgments placed by these cultural patterns on acts of conduct. The approved act of successful malignity for the Dobu would be deeply disapproved by the Zuni, and only slightly approved or tolerated by the Kwakiutl. The Kwakiutl's triumph of self-aggrandizement would be deeply disapproved by the Zuni, and considered rather childish by the Dobu. And the Zuni's sobriety and attitude of peace with the world would be considered silly and unrealistic, if not plumb crazy, by both the other people.

With such diversity of ethical attitude and moral code, what inference is more direct than that ethical judgments are relative to the cultures of persons making them. This is the ethical theory of cultural relativism. The theory has received strong support, as one can easily see, from the investigations of anthropologists studying primitive cultures and equally from

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Mentor Books, New York, New American Library Inc.,), pp. 116–119, 159, 203–205.

sociologists describing the cultural patterns of civilized societies. The cultural relativist theory is that there are no ethical criteria that can find rational justification outside of the cultural demands of a cultural pattern, and that every cultural pattern is as legitimate as every other.

That every cultural pattern does make powerful demands upon the conduct of the people of that culture is something that cannot be denied. These ethical criteria, and the fact that they differ from culture to culture, have been confirmed by a vast array of data. The only question, and one which will be taken up presently, is whether these are the ultimate and only justifiable ethical criteria. That there is no substantial evidence for criteria beyond these is the stand taken by the cultural relativist.

But in emphasizing what the cultural relativist is affirming in his ethical theory, we have strayed from the question first raised in this section as to what a cultural pattern is. We said it was a set of social dispositions. Then, to have some examples of cultural patterns in mind, we referred to Ruth Benedict's descriptions of the cultural patterns of three primitive peoples, noticing that the more complex cultural patterns of civilized peoples like ourselves could be similarly described and would turn out to be as diverse from one another as those of primitive peoples.

A term frequently used by Ruth Benedict in describing these cultural patterns is *institution.* A cultural pattern is a set of social institutions. An institution is precisely what a social disposition is. A cultural pattern can, accordingly, be analyzed into the institutions of which it is composed and the relations of these institutions to one another. The heart of the question then is what constitutes an institution.

Let us take the institution of the family. Nearly every culture has this institution. In our culture the family is monogamous. It consists of two members, one from each sex, who are permitted to join in conjugal relations and bring forth children and rear them. These are important social functions—none less than the propagation and continuance of the society. An institution such as the family thus embodies social functions. More than that, it

distributes these functions in the form of roles which the members of the institution are expected to carry out. There is the role of the husband and the role of the wife. These roles carry with them obligations, which are highly detailed and often complex enough to deserve being called sub-roles within the general role of being a husband or a wife. In our culture the husband is supposed to be a breadwinner, a good handyman about the house, a good lover, a faithful husband, and a good father. He is generally regarded as the head of the house. Matters of ultimate decision and family discipline fall upon him. In some communities he is literally the ruler of the household, in others he is supposed to defer in large degree to the feelings of his wife. The wife is expected to be a loving mate, a good mother, a manager of the household in all its details, a supervisor of the servants in the house, or, if there are no servants, a houseworker and cook. The complexity of these divisions of function in the roles of husband and wife may be seen by the fact that if tea is being served the wife is supposed to prepare it, but if cocktails, the husband. If there are any repairs in the house requiring sewing, this is the duty of the wife. If they are of a sort requiring carpenter's tools, this is the duty of the husband.

Then there are the roles of the children. The children are expected to be obedient to the parents. It is the duty of parents to acculturate their children to the expected balance of obedience and independence. It is the children's duty to conform to the demands of the household and co-operate in its harmonious functioning. The role of a child in a family changes with age. Certain responsibilities devolve upon a school age child not expected earlier. Older children are expected to take over some of the responsibilities of the parents, in the care of younger children, helping in the house, even helping in the finances, particularly for some of their own needs.

We could go on with these details, but these are enough to show the complex pattern of demands an institution lays upon the persons involved. A cultural pattern is that of the institutions making it up, and an institutional pattern, like the family,

is that of the roles which distribute the various functions carried out by the institution.

Now, clearly, an institution is not an act, nor even a collection of acts. It is a set of dispositions for action according to certain social demands. A disposition spreads over many acts and over acts yet to be made. It determines the potentialities of action within a social group.

How does one describe the potentiality of an action? Let us approach this question through the classic instance of an egg being a potential chick. To speak of an egg as a potential chick is the same as saying the egg has a disposition to become a chick. Now, to describe this disposition, we need two things. We need a description of the egg that is the seat of the disposition and of the chick that is what the egg has the disposition to become. In describing any disposition, then, we need to know its *seat* and its *character*. The seat is that which carries the disposition and makes it an existent thing. Without the egg, there is no potential chick. But the character of the disposition is what the disposition potentially is, what it is disposed to become, what it demands, what it has reference to.

Now, in recognition of the fact that a cultural pattern or an institution is a dispositional object, what is its seat and what is its character? Again, take the family institution. Its character we have already described. It is those family demands which come out as the roles determining the functions of the various members of the family. But what is the seat? What is it in the family that corresponds to the egg in giving to its disposition a place and a being?

The first thought is that the seat of the family is its members. These do constitute a large part of the seat of a family. Without them the family institution would not exist. But a little thought shows that the particular family institution described above would not exist if it were not for the existence of a lot of material things which make the carrying on of the particular functions described possible.

Expecting a modern family to function without the tools

which make the various roles possible is as much as to eliminate these roles from the family, and so to destroy this particular institution and substitute another. When the whole family sleeps and lives in a single-room hut, rather than in a house with a number of rooms, there is a big change in the family pattern of living. Then eliminate stoves and metal utensils and reduce all tools to those made of wood, bone, and stone, and you have brought your family into the cultural pattern of the stone age, yet there has been no change in the members of the family. So it becomes clear that the seat of an institution and of a cultural pattern includes the artifacts, that is, the works of men produced within the culture, as well as the members of the institution or cultural pattern. The members of a social group and its artifacts get enmeshed in its cultural relations so as to form an integral group separated to a large extent and perhaps completely from other groups.

Now, up to this point we have been describing only one sort of social institution—the functional institution that distributes the roles which various persons are expected to perform within the institution. For our immediate purposes this is the most important type of institution to become aware of. But there is another type of social institution, which for purposes other than appreciating the force of the arguments for cultural relativism, is equally significant. It is the communal institution. A communal institution does not distribute functions, but provides for mutual understanding among people. Language is a good instance of a communal institution. People widely separated in different functional institutions may nevertheless speak a common language and so be able fully to communicate with one another. Common mythologies, faiths, and aesthetic, craft, and economic techniques are also communal institutions so far as they are not absobred into functional institutions. A great deal of what is commonly called tradition is of the nature of communal institution. The seat of a communal institution is the range of persons who understand one another through the institution and such artifacts as are necessary for its operation. The

character of a communal institution is the intellectual and emotional meanings that are actualized when the institution is in operation. The seat of the English language is all the persons who speak it or write it with such writing instruments as are required. The character of the English language is the meaningful vocabulary and syntax employed by those speaking and writing it. And notice that the range of English-speaking people spreads far outside the political and other functional institutions of which these persons are members.

With these descriptions and illustrations in mind, we can now give a more specific definition of a cultural pattern than earlier. *A cultural pattern is the set of institutions, both functional and communal, that are effectively operating within a group of persons.*

However, there are certain functional institutions that have a superior power over others in separating social groups and organizing them into more or less compact social units. These are in general the political and tribal institutions. Such compact units are known as *societies*. (It is the institutional organization of such societies and the cultural patterns, both functional and communal, operating within the boundaries of such societies to which the cultural relativist is mainly referring.) Such were the primitive societies of the Zuni, Dobu, and Kwakiutl. Such were the early civilized societies of Egypt, Assyria, the Inca, and the Aztec; such are the modern civilized societies of the United States, England, Soviet Russia, India, and Iran. These are all separated from one another by certain strong tribal or political functional institutions. The next matter of importance, then, for the understanding of cultural relativism is the definition and demarcation of the boundaries of a society.

What Are the Boundaries of a Society? In-group and Out-group

From our conclusions of the previous section, we can now easily define a society in the broadest sense as a group of persons

organized together under a functional institution. Then we discover that functional institutions and the societies they define have various relations to one another. They may overlap, some may be inclusive of others, and some are entirely external to others. One man may be a member of several different societies at once—his family, his business, his church, his club, his political party, his town, state, and nation. These may sometimes interfere with one another. Often no conflict arises because it is part of the character of some institutions to demand priority over others in certain, and sometimes in all, respects. A man's business, in contemporary America, ordinarily takes priority over all other duties during his weekday activities, unless there is a family emergency. A lawsuit, however, will take precedence over his business. And demands of the federal government under the restrictions of the Constitution which are part of the functional pattern of this political institution take precedence over all. Thus the functional institutions of contemporary United States are all interrelated with various degrees of definiteness of priority. But there is little doubt today that for us there is a dominant functional priority in the institution of the federal government over the members it includes. This is another way of stating the rather obvious fact that the dominant societies of the world today are national—even though the United Nations is the more inclusive. Hence the effective cultural patterns of the contemporary civilized world are national. Within the institution of a nation is a relatively well consolidated system of institutions—in some nations more integrated than in others. But between nations there are broad gaps of effective cultural relationships. So, the boundaries of modern societies for the cultural relativist will in the final accounting be the boundaries of the nations as functioning units.

The boundaries of primitive societies are usually much easier to determine. They are the tribal, or sometimes, the village, communities. They are determined again by the limits of dominantly effective institutional control over an institutionalized group.

These boundaries are for the cultural relativist of crucial importance. They constitute the limits of ethical responsibility for the members of a society. For the cultural relativist stresses the diversity of cultural patterns operative within different societies. He emphasizes also the dynamic effectiveness of acculturation and the demands for the conformity of members of a society to its particular cultural pattern. These demands are clearly ethical demands according to our earlier definition, since they legislate over acts of conduct. Social institutions are ethical criteria with the powerful sanctions of social approval and disapproval and, if necessary, of physical force such as banishment.

A social institution is a selective system with its own built-in criteria of conduct. The dynamics of enforcement come from the purposeful actions of the acculturated members of the society, and the trial acts, whether conforming adequately or not, are performed by these same acculturated members and corrected in the society's own institutional terms. There is no question that a functional institution is an effective moral criterion. The only question is how final a moral criteron it is.

The cultural relativist asserts there is no legitimate or effective ethical appeal beyond it. The outermost effective boundaries of a society mark the furthest boundaries of ethical responsibility for the members of that society. The ethical criteria of a primitive tribe cannot reach the conduct of persons in any other tribe. The same with civilized nations. If monogamy is the institutionalized form of the family in one nation, and polygamy in another, and there is no effective institutionalized dominance of some international society over the institutions of nations, then there is, according to cultural relativism, no ethical criterion for judging the comparative morality of these two forms of family institution. The monogamist may disapprove of the polygamist's conduct with horror and disgust, but there is no way in which his disapproval can reach the polygamist, who in his turn ridicules the abstinence of the monogamist, which only makes the monogamist the more horrified. There is no way in which institutionally insulated cultural patterns can touch one

another in the sanctioning of the conduct of each other's societies.

This condition gives rise to the concept of in-group versus out-group. This is a very ancient distinction deeply imbedded in human thought and action. It is the distinction of Greek and barbarian, Christian and pagan, Jew and gentile, orthodox and heretic, and so on. Those within the boundaries of a given cultural pattern comprise the in-group. All others outside these boundaries are the out-group. Persons of the in-group are persons who are of your kind, to whom you are responsible, who are responsible to you, whom you can on the whole trust and who are generally good, right-minded people. Then there are the outsiders who are people you do not know, who have outlandish ways, who are untrustworthy, and who are probably, if not quite certainly, bad. This attitude of in-group versus out-group is so deeply ingrained as to suggest it may be an instinctive human trait, the trait that makes man a social animal, leads him to identify himself with his group, and become deeply loyal to it.

The ethics of primitive and early civilized man, which is apparently always or nearly always a cultural absolutism, would implicitly assume the ethical priority of the in-group and the ethical neutrality, or even evil, of the out-group. It is a matter of special note when some prophet or philosopher in the history of culture states an ethical principle that brings the out-group also within the boundaries of ethical consideration. The teachings of Socrates are an example. In the early pages of Plato's *Republic,* the character Polemarchus is led to say, "Justice consists in helping one's friends, and harming one's enemies." This ethical principle was clearly an accepted one in Athens, and implies the in-group versus out-group distinction. Socrates replies, "If the just man is good, the business of harming people, whether friends or not, must belong to his opposite, the unjust man. . . . We have found that it is never right to harm anyone." The spirit of Socrates' reply is to break down the distinction between an in-group and an out-group among men. Later the same principle comes out in the teaching of the New Testament. These two

influences descending through Roman and Christian ethics have nearly obliterated the ethical principle of in-group priority in later civilized Western culture.

One now finds many ethical writers assuming the opposite of in-group priority and affirming that a maxim cannot count as having any ethical significance unless it is taken to apply to all men equally. We might call this the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. We shall meet with it in the theories ahead. But here we shall remark only on the sort of reply the cultural relativist can make, and it is a very effective reply.

He will point out first that as a matter of descriptive fact the criterion of the brotherhood of man is not incorporated into the cultural patterns of many human societies. It is not, then, a universal ethical criterion among human cultures. One must not confuse the universal human reference of the criterion with the universal cultural acceptance of it. Where it is not culturally accepted, it is hard to see how it can be said to hold since there are no sanctions to correct violations of it. Moreover, it is noticeable that even the cultures that have accepted it have not historically lived up to it. The Christians in their treatment of non-Christians have often been more interested in making Christians of them—that is, making them join the in-group—than in considering them as brothers and equals. By a slight twist of interpretation, a group may convince themselves that they most benefit mankind by compelling all men to conform to the criteria of their own culture which they are so certain are the right ones. The doctrine of the brotherhood of man thus becomes an excuse for a crusade to institute a cultural absolutism according to the cultural pattern of a particular, and possibly fanatical, society. In short, the cultural relativists' first argument is that the evidence for the universal sanctioning of the doctrine of the brotherhood of man is badly lacking.

Second, he can easily account for the emergence of this doctrine in recent cultural patterns by the fact that human populations and the size of human societies have been increasing so fast that total social isolation is obviously ceasing to be practical.

The modern political society does have to concern itself with nearly everybody on the face of the earth. The in-group out-group distinction actually is softening and may well entirely disappear among men in the future, if a dominant international political organization can be worked out and legislate over all other social institutions.

But, lastly, even if the doctrine of the brotherhood of man became actualized in a universal society of mankind, there would still be an out-group where ethical responsibilities ceased. The out-group then would be the non-human animals that men have to deal with. Men would still kill snakes and gophers without ethical compunction. These animals, it should be noticed, also exhibit purposive behavior often superior to infant human behavior or adult moron behavior. It is not because of the nature of their behavior that we ignore them ethically, but because they are not members of our effective system of human institutions.

This insistence, on the part of the cultural relativist, that an ethical criterion has no claim or even existence unless it can be shown effectively to correct and sanction actual human conduct is something we shall never be able to dismiss. And the distinction between in-group and out-group is an element of that insistence. Far as we may be led from the tenets of cultural relativism, this distinction will always remain with us. Ethical principles are not likely to be so universal but that there will not be regions where they do not apply.

Cultural Lag and the Social Reformer

The difficulty with the ethical theory of cultural relativism, then, cannot be laid to the relativity of institutionalized criteria of conduct. It emerges elsewhere. It comes to light in another well-evidenced fact connected with the cultural process. This is the fact known as *cultural lag*. Cultural institutions once highly functional and harmonious in their operation with other institutions of a culture often cease to be so. Environmental conditions

may have changed. Inventions may have been introduced into the society. New, more efficient techniques may have been taken up by cultural diffusion from neighboring societies. The very success of a society in the functioning of its institutions may have brought on an era of prosperity which renders some of the institutions oppressive and obsolete. For many such reasons institutions once efficient and useful for a society cease to be so. And then there is a cultural lag.

When institutions exhibit a cultural lag, the effect upon a society is a marked increase in the frustrations and conflicts of purpose for the people living in it. This produces restlessness and increased tension among the people which may mount to revolt and loss of confidence in the tribal or political agencies of authority. At the same time there is a powerful persistence in the compulsion of a cultural pattern for conformity. Social institutions have great inertia. They are very hard to change.

Here is where cultural relativism as an ethical theory meets its great difficulty. There is no question about the sociological facts. And the strength of cultural relativism lies in its strict adherence to the facts of the social process and the ways in which cultures actually do generate effective criteria for the control and correction of conduct. But the theory clearly states that these criteria are the institutions in action in a society. It then seems clearly to follow that conformity to the institution is always right and what everybody in the society ought to do. Yet if there is reason in holding that an outworn institution ought to be changed, this can only be done by persons within the society ceasing to conform to the obsolete institution. This is a real dilemma for the cultural relativist.

The issue comes to a head in determining the proper ethical evaluation of a social reformer. Many of the great heroes of political history are the successful social reformers—Pericles, Marc Antony, Cromwell, Washington—or the martyrs to causes which come to be approved—Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, Thomas More. These men were nonconformists, and by the theory of the cultural relativist were all bad men.

Of course, once the obsolete institution has been supplanted by a new one, then the cultural relativist is out of trouble. Then what everybody ought to do is to conform to the new effective institution. But how can the cultural relativist evaluate the great reformers in the interval of revolt, while they are exerting themselves to remedy a cultural lag?

Of course, the cultural relativist is on sound premises in his evaluation of the thousands of unsuccessful and unjustified rebels who revolt against socially-needed institutions. They were bad men and were properly corrected—or, at least, they were men of bad judgment who mistook their personal resentment against socially justifiable institutional discipline for evidence of cultural lag. But where there is demonstrable cultural lag, what can the cultural relativist say? The difficulty facing him is that here seems to be evidence of some other ethical criterion which has priority over the criterion of a cultural pattern.

If we examine the occasions of cultural lag in mass, we find that they divide into three main types:

1. An institution once required ceases to be socially so necessary and needs to be eliminated or modified. The tension here is between the discipline enforced by the institution and the personal satisfactions of the people prohibited by an institution no longer required. The desire of persons for the greatest freedom for satisfactions is in conflict with a social regulation known to be unnecessary. An illustration would be the continuance of a custom of universal military training in a society when the threat of foreign invasion had ceased.

2. There is the need of more discipline in an institution, or even of a new one, to take care of a change or an emergency which threatens the integrity or the security of a society. An illustration would be the need of a heavy draft to raise an army adequate to protect a nation threatened with invasion.

3. Where there is neither a question of unnecessary frustration of satisfactions, nor of providing for the security and pres-

ervation of a society, there is sometimes a need simply to modify an institution so as to harmonize better with other institutions—in short, to produce a higher degree of integration. For when social regulations are inconsistent with one another, action is blocked and social relations are disrupted. An illustration would be the conflict between the demands of a labor union to organize freely in an industrial society and government regulations against monopoly.

A cultural relativist can make a somewhat plausible case for himself as regards the third type of conflict. For here the conflict is between two institutions both demanding conformity, and it could be said that the demand for a maximum of cultural conformity entails a maximum of consistency in conformity. And yet the carrying through of this demand amounts to the transforming of the criterion of cultural conformity into that of cultural integration—and this is quite a different thing. This concession on the part of a cultural relativist amounts to an abandonment of the particular sort of relativism he initially insists upon so strongly. For if cultural integration is to be the ultimate criterion of human conduct, then it is possible to compare one cultural pattern with another in terms of the degree of integration of its system of institutions. The better-integrated culture would be the ethically better one, and one that the less-integrated cultures ought to emulate. So, a cultural relativist who appeals to the criterion of integration virtually gives up his theory. A careful reading of Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* shows that she herself does just this, to such a degree that some of her readers do not regard her as a cultural relativist at all. In short, ultimate resort to the integrative solution on the part of a cultural relativist converts him into an ethical integrationist—believing a theory which consistently carried out is the so-called self-realization theory to be studied in detail later.

The second type of conflict places the security and preservation of a society first, which ultimately means placing the criterion of the adaptation of a society to its environment above

the criterion of conformity to cultural pattern. The development of this criterion leads to the evolutionary ethical theory, which is another theory we shall later study in detail. Most anthropologists show great respect for the criterion of cultural adaptation, often not realizing that this would put cultural relativity in an entirely subordinate position.

The first type of conflict places the maximization of human satisfactions as a criterion with priority over conformity to cultural pattern. This is the basis of one of the oldest and most persistent of ethical theories—hedonism—which will be the subject of the next chapter.

So, the fact of cultural lag is the critical datum that puts an end to the claims of cultural relativism as a fully adequate ethical theory. On this evidence there are other ethical criteria that frequently have priority over that of cultural conformity. Courageous men from time to time become aware of the relevancy of these other criteria for the correction of institutions no longer suited for their societies. They act to change these institutions by whatever means they can and have to stand up against the full impact of the forces for conformity. When finally the changes have been brought about and the cause won, the people look back and see that these men were right and are grateful for their efforts and for their sacrifices. This is what accounts for the honor given to great reformers throughout the ages. The bestowing of this honor is a tacit recognition by men the world over that there are criteria of conduct with sanctions more authoritative than those demanding conformity to custom and established institutions, criteria which justify resistance to the inertia of intrenched tradition for the purpose of correcting instances of cultural lag.

But though cultural conformity thus turns out to be something less than an ultimate ethical criterion of right and wrong, we should do unwisely to ignore it or cease to respect it. The traditions and institutions of one's society still remain exceedingly effective criteria of conduct and properly regulate most of people's actions most of the time. But every once in a while they

go wrong and their demands cease to be reliable guides. That is when there is a cultural lag, and appeal must be made to other criteria which are of broader human outlook and more reliable for human purposes.

CHAPTER 5

INDIVIDUAL OR EGOISTIC HEDONISM

The Main Outline of the General Theory of Hedonism

THE APPEALS to pleasure and the satisfaction of desire are as old as tradition. Employed as criteria for the evaluation of conduct, they constitute probably the oldest purely rational system of ethics in the world. There is a reason for this. These criteria take their departure from the impulsive nature of man. And human impulse is always more or less resistant to the demands of custom. Acculturation means precisely the channeling of human impulses into the ways of a culture. A child puts up a good deal of resistance to the acculturation process, till his native impulses are tamed, and they probably never are completely tamed in any man. So, there is a constant pressure from the impulses against inhibiting tradition.

The first idea a man is likely to have once he gets somewhat free in his thoughts from the beliefs instilled in him by his culture is why he should not seek the maximum satisfaction for his impulses and avoid so far as possible the artificial restraints of convention. Such a man is known as a hedonist, a term derived from the Greek word for pleasure, as if we should say "a pleasurist." Over and again, the hedonists have been the nonconformists

in human societies. And there is an obvious sense in which impulse is more fundamental than convention. To most reflective men, it comes as something quite self-evident that if no useful reason can be shown for following a social convention, then there is no reason to let it inhibit one's satisfactions. Man's impulses are natural whereas man's conventions are artificial. Conventions should be subordinated to satisfactions. In short, with a little reflection it seems clear that the basic criterion for evaluating conduct is that of obtaining the greatest amount of satisfaction with the least amount of dissatisfaction, or, in strict hedonistic terms, the greatest amount of pleasure with the least amount of pain.

However, as soon as a man begins to rationalize this theory so as to make it adequate to account for all the facts and problems of human conduct and at the same time self-consistent, he runs up against a number of difficulties that have to be provided for. From the long history of hedonism, practically all these difficulties are probably now well known. No theory has been more thoroughly subject to criticism. Since it is the typical opponent of an uncritical acceptance of tradition, all the vigorous supporters of tradition have spared no pains in analyzing the weak points of hedonism. The theory has been repeatedly "refuted" and has as frequently bobbed up again with renewed life. The result is that the theory as it may be defended today is by no means the simple view it once was. And it still has some serious difficulties. But there are certain features about it that will not be put down and which any ethical view that hopes to be adequate must take into account.

In the treatment that follows, the theory is divided into two stages—individual hedonism and social hedonism. The latter is often called utilitarianism. Social hedonism does not, in my opinion, gain its full evidential force unless approached through individual hedonism. The latter, as far as it goes, is extremely convincing, and the momentum of its persuasiveness overflows into social hedonism. This is the first complication upon the simple early theory, which was essentially an individual hedon-

ism, sometimes more or less vaguely extended into the social sphere.

The second complication has to do with the closer determination of what is to be meant by satisfaction. Just what is the unit of value to be maximized in the ethical criterion? In most accounts it is assumed to be pleasure, and its opposite to be minimized, pain—hence the name of the theory, hedonism. But in some accounts, the unit is desire; positive value is positive desire or appetition, and negative value is negative desire or aversion. Thus Hobbes writes, "small beginnings of motion, within the body of man, . . . are commonly called *endeavour*. This endeavour, when it is toward something which causes it, is called *appetite* or *desire*. . . . And when the endeavour is fromward something, it is generally called *aversion*. . . . Whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth *good;* and the object of his hate and aversion, *evil*." Hobbes adds later that "*pleasure* seemeth to be a corroboration of vitall motion and a help thereunto," and "therefore . . . is the apparance or sense of good; and *molestation* or *displeasure* the apparance or sense of evil." [1] For Hobbes the active basic units of value are *appetite* and *aversion,* and pleasure and displeasure are mere accompaniments of desire and aversion, hardly even real.

The emphasis on desire will be found in Spinoza, Hobbes and more recently in Ehrenfels and R. B. Perry, who gave this approach the name of Interest Theory. The emphasis on pleasure will be found in Epicurus, Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Sidgwick among classical moralists. These are actually two phases of the same theory, though it does make a difference whether priority is given to pleasure or to desire. But this is an issue which ultimately the facts of human motivation themselves can resolve. The solution lies in the detailed description of just what happens in purposive action. We shall come to that presently.

Meantime, we need a term that will include both the values

[1] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Everyman's Library, London, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., and New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), pp. 23–25.

of pleasure and desire, and ready to hand appears the term *satisfaction* which is neutral as to this issue. A pleasure is a satisfaction and so is the fulfillment of desire. A pain is a dissatisfaction and so is an aversion and the frustration of desire.

Taking satisfaction as the unit of value for the hedonistic theory—and allowing the name hedonism to include both the pleasure and the interest phases of the theory—we can outline the two stages for the full development of the theory as follows:

I. *Individual Hedonism*

A. Definition of value—satisfaction versus dissatisfaction.
B. Quantitative standards of value—amount of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.
C. Prudence—consideration of the consequences of an act upon an individual's satisfactions.

II. *Social Hedonism* (*Utilitarianism*)

A. The Principle of Social Justice—every man's satisfactions count equally.
B. The Greatest Happiness Principle—the greatest quantity of satisfaction for the greatest number of people.
C. Social Sanctions
   1. External—approbative, civil, religious.
   2. Internal—conscience.

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to individual hedonism, and the next chapter to social hedonism. Between the two the whole of this important theory will be spread out before us.

Psychological Hedonism

A distinction of great importance, that has come to the fore in recent years and must be faced before going further, is that between Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism. According to the former, the pleasure or satisfaction criterion is sanctioned (or justified for belief) by the very way men act. The argument is that psychologically men actually do seek to

maximize their satisfactions; consequently, this is a criterion of conduct embedded in human nature, scientifically evidenced in biological fact, and so sanctioned by the facts of human behavior themselves as these are truthfully described.

The psychological hedonist thus appeals to what we earlier called a selective system. He believes he can indicate in the motivation of human conduct an implicit criterion by which conduct corrects itself in its own terms when the consequences of an act show it to have been in error. A man seeks satisfaction. If the act he performs fails to achieve it, he corrects his error in terms of what he is seeking and performs another act until he gets his satisfaction.

Ethical hedonism, on the other hand, develops when a hedonist begins to wonder if he has enough evidence to support a psychological hedonism but nevertheless holds that there is no better ethical ideal. According to ethical hedonism, even though it turns out that men are not psychologically motivated to seek the greatest amount of satisfactions, still this is the proper ethical criterion. Even though this is not the way men *do* act, this is the way men *ought* to act. The ethical hedonist gives up trying to support his criterion by the facts of human behavior and undertakes to sanction it by some other means.

In my opinion the strength of hedonism lies in its appeal to the facts, and that means in psychological hedonism. It has been almost taken for granted by most ethical writers of recent decades that the case for psychological hedonism has been lost. Yet the hedonistic theory persists with a resilience that belies the weakened presentation given it in the form of ethical hedonism. It would seem as though there must be something in the facts of human motivation to keep the hedonistic doctrine going.

The explanation, I believe, is that the theories of motivation given by the earlier hedonists were grossly oversimplified. If a hedonist does not insist upon pleasure or upon desire alone as a sole source of motivation, if he joins together these two phases of the hedonistic view (as in fact they are closely interconnected

in the structure of a purposive act), then it may appear that the principal thesis of psychological hedonism does hold true—that men do act so as to maximize their satisfactions.

Let us see what the oversimplified theory held. It was never very precise. Its upshot was that men acted in the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The avoidance of pain was easy enough to observe in any riddance reaction. The pursuit of pleasure was the difficult thing to describe. A common view was that the anticipation of pleasure was the motive for seeking its realization. But since the anticipation of pleasure is not pleasure itself, how could pleasure be regarded as the motive of its own pursuit. It would have been more plausible to suggest that the pain from the deprivation of a desired pleasure motivated the act. But this would not explain a motivation to maximize pleasure, but only to minimize pain. Another common suggestion was that the idea of a pleasure-giving object induced pleasant feelings in the idea, hence the pleasant idea of the object motivated the pursuit of it. This is more nearly to the point. But it might well be asked why a man would not continue to bask in the pleasures of anticipation rather than go off in pursuit of an object whose pleasure might be illusory.

The most devastating argument against the pure pleasure theory of motivation, however, was delivered by Bishop Butler. It amounted to his pointing out that a motivating drive is directed upon its object, not upon pleasure.[2] And this accords

[2] The crucial reference to Bishop Butler is to be found in his *Fifteen Sermons upon Human Nature,* Sermon XI, § 3 (*The Works of Joseph Butler, D.C.L.* Vol. II, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1896). There he indicates a distinction between a man's "general desire for his own happiness," which he believed developed in "all sensible creatures who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest," and which he called self-love, and quite different from this "a variety of particular affections, passions, and appetites to external objects. . . . The object the former self-love pursues is somewhat internal, our own happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction; whether we have or have not a distinct particular perception, what it is, or wherein it consists; the objects of the latter are this or that particular external thing, which the affections tend towards and of which it hath always a particular idea or perception."

perfectly with the contemporary drive-reduction theory of motivation. If we look back at the diagram for an appetition (Chapter 2, p. 20), it appears clearly that the motivation right

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The last clause is the critical one. It discloses a most perspicuous insight regarding human motivation and seems to be the first introspective report of this sort in the history of ethics or psychology. It is the more remarkable in that it does not lead him to reject a pleasure criterion. For the object of self-love is a maximization of pleasure, or at least of satisfaction including pleasure—namely "happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction." But self-love is the result of reflection developed in "all creatures who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest." He noticed that the motive of action is not pleasure where the desire for an object is concerned. But he also noticed that somehow a criterion for actions felt as good actions by a person was the "happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction" they yielded, self-love.

This report of his raises, as a matter of fact, more problems than it resolves. For self-love is quite clearly for him a motivating principle for any reflective man. And he does not ever meet the problem of how self-love can be a motivating agent, for in the passage quoted above he seems to be asserting that *all* motivation is for an "external" object of desire. There is also the problem of how an *object* of desire not yet attained and only held as a "particular idea or perception" can be a dynamic motivating agent, or why "the affections tend towards it." But his insight was remarkable enough as it stands.

He did notice that, for a goal-directed purpose, pleasure was not the motivating agent. He noticed that the goal of such an act was not pleasure but the object anticipated. He noticed that there was "a particular idea of the object" entertained by a person, which guided the desire. He noticed that there was a dynamic tendency heading the desire towards its object. That was a lot to have noticed with not much more to go on than the psychology of Hobbes and Locke for a background.

On the basis of present psychological knowledge, we can now state (see the diagram, Ch. 2, p. 20) that in a goal-seeking purpose, the motive is the drive (I) with specific conditions of quiescence which determine the *tendency,* that the *idea* is the anticipatory set (A^n), that the *object* is the goal object (O^g), and that pleasure is not the motive nor the goal of such action (except rarely and qualifiedly).

But we have to add that in the consummatory area (Q^p) pleasure does become a motive (cf. p. 82) and as a factor in the learning process even has an effect on the drive and that in a "free act" (cf. p. 101) pleasure has ultimate priority as a motive in the consummatory field over drive achievement. This last fact is the one that finally justifies a certain priority of the standard for maximizing pleasure over that of achievement in individual hedonism (cf. p. 101). But Bishop Butler even had a strong inkling of that fact in his principle of self-love.

down the line comes from the drive. For each anticipatory set (A^n) the motive is not pleasure, nor even the anticipation of pleasure. It is the impulse of the drive channeled through the anticipatory references to the object (O^g). And for the original impulse pattern such as the thirst of the geologist on his field trip, the motivation is the drive impulse itself directed by way of its conditions of quiescence to the specific quiescence pattern (Q^p), which would satisfy those conditions. It is true that with the consummatory act of the quiescence pattern intense pleasure emerged. But the primary motivation was that of the drive to attain its satisfaction. The motivation was not pleasure.

Even though pleasure might be anticipated, and so enter as an object of anticipation, still pleasure would not be the motivating agent but only an element in the object of a drive-motivated desire.

So, those writers who set up desire as the motivating agent for their hedonistic theories were quite right over a wide range of human motivation. And within this range they were also right in concluding that the criterion of purposive selection was that of maximizing achievement in the satisfaction of desires. Within this range the criterion was not the maximizing of pleasure.

It is this aspect of human motivation that the interest school stressed. They generalized their observations in this area and assumed that all purposive action is motivated by the drives of desires and that the sole selective criterion for purposive action is that of maximizing the achievement of desire. In this generalization, however, they seem to have been mistaken.

For in the appetitive process a remarkable change takes place when in the pursuit of the terminal goal of a drive the person finally enters the consummatory field. Up to that point, the person is acting to reach the goal in the speediest way and by the shortest route. He is maximizing the efficiency of his achievement. But the moment he enters the consummatory field, if his drive is not painfully in need of reduction and no other drives are pressing for satisfaction, his behavior relaxes and he no longer seeks to bring his drive to the quickest possible conclu-

sion. On the contrary, he acts so as to spread out the pleasurable satisfaction to the maximum available there. He is now maximizing his pleasures in the consummatory field. He maneuvers in space for the optimum position for pleasurable stimulation, and he maneuvers in time to spread the pleasures for the longest duration at optimum intensity. He will sacrifice some intensity to make the pleasures last longer, but he selects his acts to bring about the greatest enjoyment.

The ways in which musical composers and dramatists order their materials to maintain the interest and continuous enjoyment of their audiences are models for an understanding of the selective action of the criterion of pleasure within the consummatory field. A composer organizes his materials, now increasing, now relaxing on the interest, so as to spread out the enjoyment of that consummatory period to the optimum.

In the consummatory field, the maximization of pleasure takes over the control of human action and exerts a priority over the maximizing of the achievement of desire. This is a very important point to notice for the ethics of hedonism.

Consider the thirsty geologist again. From the place where he noticed his thirst and discovered his canteen empty to the place where he found water, all of his actions were guided by the selective agency of his drive to achieve his goal—and the quicker the better. But when he found his water bubbling from a cool spring in a green patch, did he hurry to reduce his drive as quickly as he could? Probably not. If his thirst had begun to get painful, he would first gulp some water to reduce the discomfort, but then when the pleasure of the drinking began to register, he would take it more slowly, spread the pleasure by dowsing his hot face with the cool water, wet his hair and the back of his neck. He would spread the enjoyment wide and long, before going on his way refreshed.

This is a fact the hedonist takes note of. And it is not a fact to be neglected. The hedonist notes that the quiescence pattern of all appetitive drives are sources of pleasure—the prime sources of pleasure—and that the selective action of achieve-

ment ceases when the consummatory field is attained, and that actually the selective action for the maximization of pleasure then takes dominance. He reaches the not unwarranted conclusion that the dominant values of human life are those of the consummatory field. These, he says, are the values the positive drives are heading for, these are the ultimate positive aims of all human action. The satisfactions of rapid achievement are simply toward the attainment of an area for the satisfactions of pleasure. As for the aversions, these are all negative achievements for the minimizing of pain. Hence the ultimate positive values for man do indeed, he says, appear to be pleasures.

The hedonist is on remarkably sound ground when he argues in this way. The psychological hedonist of the old school made a serious blunder, however, when he stated that pleasure (or the avoidance of pain) is the sole motivating agent for human action. That, as we can plainly see in any detailed description of an appetitive purpose, is not true. The traditional psychological hedonism is out.

But an extended form of psychological hedonism amalgamating the selective action of achievement with that of pleasure is, in view of present psychological findings, very much in. What the psychological hedonist should have said, and may now well say, is that during the achievement phases of a purposive act, the dominant selective system is that for maximizing achievement in the attainment of the desired goals (which generally are *not* pleasure) but that upon the attainment of the terminal goal of the consummatory quiescence pattern of a drive, the selective system for the maximization of pleasure takes over with priority over that of achievement.

Human motivation is thus of two kinds depending on which phase of a purposive structure is in action. In the instrumental phase, the motivation is for the speediest attainment of the goal; it is for the maximization of the satisfactions of desire. In the consummatory phase, the motivation is for the longest duration and spread of the enjoyment; it is for the maximization of the satisfactions of pleasure. Two distinct selective systems are thus

embedded in the structure of a purposive act, showing up two distinct ethical criteria—one for the maximization of desire in achievement, and one for the maximization of pleasure.

Thus the desire or interest theory and the pleasure theory of human motivation were both correct in their insistence that acts really were motivated in their terms. But both extended their theories beyond their evidence when each held that theirs was the only kind of motivation and denied the distinctly different mode of motivation pointed out by the other. Both were justified, moreover, in insisting that these modes of motivation instituted dynamic norms or criteria for human conduct embedded in the very processes of human action. And between the two there are no other modes of purposive motivation.

On the psychological evidence at hand (and it has become very extensive), all purposive human action is motivated either by desire or pleasure. A psychological hedonism which takes its stand on the criteria of achievement and pleasure *both* is on firm empirical ground. There is a problem as to how these two criteria work in relation to each other and as to which has priority over the other and when. But the evidential base for an ethics of psychological hedonism is firmly re-established. This does not mean that a hedonistic ethics so based will necessarily constitute a fully adequate ethical theory. But it does mean that no ethical theory will be adequate that does not provide for the natural norms, the selective systems, controlling conduct in terms of the satisfactions of desire and those of pleasure.

With this strong base, we can now proceed to develop a psychological hedonism and see how far it can go. There will be occasion to say something more later about ethical hedonism.

Definitions and Standards for Ethics in General

If we look back at the skeleton outline of individual hedonism, it will be seen that the first two headings are (*A*) definition of value and (*B*) quantitative standards of value. These are the

two kinds of criteria which all ethical theories have to consider. Before we go any further, it will consequently be wise to give some thought to the nature of ethical criteria in general, as well as to see how they are applied to the hedonistic theory in particular.

We have seen in our description of purposive structures in Chapter 2, the way in which these organize acts into selective systems with a split dynamics so that the systems become self-corrective. And we pointed out that such systems act as natural norms of conduct. In the preceding section of this chapter, the analysis was carried further and brought to light the existence of two such norms in the structure of purposive acts, one for maximizing the satisfactions of desire and one for maximizing pleasure. Such selective systems as these perform their corrective selections upon acts of conduct whether any man describes them or not. That is to say, these norms of conduct, these ethical criteria, are at work effectively distinguishing between good and bad acts of conduct and selecting the right from the wrong acts, without any moralist or ethical theorist needing to be on hand to do it. Often, moreover, these norms do their work of selecting the right from the wrong without any language being used in the process at all.

This last may seem like an obvious and trivial statement, but it is a very important one to take in. For failure to keep it in mind can lead to some unnecessary problems in the development of ethical theory. Natural norms and their action in selective systems are matters of fact. But as soon as men begin to be concerned about them and to want to understand them, men have to try to describe them and make hypotheses and theories about them. Then words have to be used.

Now, a verbal description of a natural norm is not the norm itself. Yet only a verbal description can be given in ethical theories. There is no way to avoid it—nor is there any necessary problem about it, if the nature of the situation is kept well in mind. Even when a writer wants to describe the spontaneous act by which the driver of a car dodges a child that runs out into

the road, the only way the writer can describe the mediating judgment or anticipatory set that channeled the driver's act is to express it in the words, "The driver judged it was a child and did not want to run over him." For if it had been a cloud of dust, he would have judged otherwise and driven right through it. A complex judgment was made by the driver. But, of course, without words. The act was too fast for words. Yet the ethical writer can only describe the driver's act with precision by means of words, as if the driver's judgment was itself in words.

This same sort of difficulty arises in giving verbal expression to an ethical criterion. It has to be stated in words. It is fantastically easy then to identify the criterion with the verbal expression. The more so, because if the verbal expression is false and so without ethical sanction in fact and yet is regarded by persons as an ethical criterion, it literally is nothing but words.

So, it is very important to emphasize the distinction between a natural norm for conduct and a criterion *in discourse*. The criterion in discourse is a verbal expression about the norm.

Now, the basic criterion in discourse for ethical judgment is a definition. It is the definition of *good* (or *right*) for the ethical theory defended. Take the cultural relativity theory considered in the previous chapter. The basic criterion for that theory, we found, was the conformity of an action by a member of a society to the cultural pattern of that society. This is the definition in discourse of right conduct for cultural relativism. This theory defines right conduct in those words.

It is very important, consequently, that the definition of *good* or *right* in ethics be one that truly describes the natural norm it refers to. Otherwise, it is without sanction and, as we have said, just words. And persons trying to regulate their conduct by a false definition are bound to get into trouble.

The kind of definition required, therefore, for the basic criterion of an ethical theory is what may be called a *descriptive definition*. A descriptive definition is one which defines the meaning of a word in terms of a description which purports to be true of some matter of fact. For ethics the descriptive definition of *good* or *right* is one that defines the word in terms of a de-

scription of a natural norm. The form of a descriptive definition is this:

$$S \longrightarrow (D \longrightarrow F)$$

A symbol, *S,* is stipulated to mean a description, *D,* of a factual matter, *F.* It is thus implicitly stipulated that the description, *D,* be true of the factual matter, *F.* As soon as the description should be found false, either it would be changed by an observer so as to become true, or else that definition would be abandoned. A descriptive definition is responsible to the facts. Such a definition of *good* or *right* in ethics would thus be responsible to the factual structure of a norm and its mode of sanctioning conduct (that is, its way of correcting conduct according to its selective system). Thus a descriptive definition which truly described a natural norm would reflect the sanctioning power of that norm and as the representative of the norm in verbal terms could exercise that sanctioning power on its own initiative.

For instance, we saw how a cultural pattern does, in fact, operate to correct human conduct towards conformity with the pattern. It does, within rather wide limits, have in fact this sanctioning power. The descriptive definition of *right conduct* that was true to the cultural pattern of a certain society would therefore clearly reflect the sanctioning power of that cultural pattern over the conduct of people in that society. The people in that society could then refer securely to the definition as a criterion for deciding which of a number of possible actions open to them was the right one for their society.

We did, of course, conclude that because of the occurrence of cultural lag, a definition of *right* action in terms of conformity to cultural pattern would not truly define such action for all circumstances. Cultural relativism, therefore, would not be adequate as a general ethical theory. In making this criticism, we were implicitly affirming that the description contained in the usual cultural relativist definition of *right conduct* would have to be modified to become fully true to the facts.

However, we also noticed that the facts of the sanctioning

power of a cultural pattern and of the in-group versus out-group operation of such sanctioning had been truly described apart from the action of cultural lag. A cultural pattern does operate as a natural norm, and any adequate ethical theory is bound to take it into account. There is indeed some truth in the theory. This somewhat limited range of truth in the theory can be preserved by a descriptive definition of a qualified sort of *right* conduct. We can descriptively define *culturally right* conduct (stressing *culturally*) as that of any person who conforms to the cultural pattern of his society. This, so far as can be seen, would be a true and reliable criterion for *culturally* right conduct. The question is then open as to whether there are not other criteria of conduct which sometimes have a priority in the correction of conduct over the criterion of cultural conformity. The fact of cultural lag was evidence, we believed, that there were.

When in the future we shall speak of one criterion having priority over another in the manner just mentioned, we shall say the one *legislates* over the other. In the context of evaluation, then, we are defining *legislation* as meaning the evaluative priority of one criterion over another.

This definition of *legislation* conveniently illustrates a quite different sort of definition from the descriptive definition we have just been examining. This latter is known as a *nominal* (or verbal) *definition*. Its form is

$$S = MN$$

There is no reference to fact in this sort of definition. It simply stipulates that a symbol, S, shall mean (in the sense of being able to substitute for) a group of symbols, MN. Thus, I am stipulating that the word *legislation*, (S), in the present discussion, means the group of symbols, "evaluative priority of one value criterion over another," (MN). I am making this stipulation arbitrarily for convenience.

Mention should be made also of the *dictionary definition*. The word *legislation* will be found in an English dictionary. A dictionary definition is a special variety of descriptive definition.

A word is stipulated to mean what the dictionary describes as the usage of the term, and the description purports to be true. I doubt if the nominal definition of *legislation* I gave above will be found in the dictionary, though Kant used the term in practically the sense given and so have some other writers. But in a nominal definition, one is not very much concerned with usage, though my stipulated use does have an analogy with the legal usage.

It must be clear enough from these paragraphs that the descriptive definition which acts as the basic ethical criterion in discourse is quite different from a nominal definition or a dictionary definition. These latter should not be confused with it. Yet, amazingly, they sometimes are.

It is not unusual to find a writer who has noticed that a definition functions as a value criterion and yet treats the latter as if it were a nominal definition. Since a nominal definition is the arbitrary stipulative act of the writer himself, the effect of this procedure is to reduce his ethical criterion to his own arbitrary act. The reader may not always notice this effect, since an ethical criterion has through tradition acquired an aroma of authority and objectivity. But the writer insisting on a nominal definition might as well be saying, "Right conduct is whatever I tell you it is."

The confusion of a dictionary definition or usage with the descriptive definition of *good* or *right* as a criterion of conduct is not so naive, but it may be even more disturbing. For a dictionary definition is likely to reflect something of the cultural pattern of the people speaking the language. This result is even more pronounced if the usage of certain ethical phrases and sentences is applied with evaluative intent to act as criteria of conduct. The effect here is to equate ethical criteria in a somewhat concealed way with conformity to the pattern of the speaker's culture. For language usage is part of the pattern of a culture and reflects the demands of its particular customs. Hence appeal to true usage of ethical terms as normative for ethical judgments amounts to a sort of cultural absolutism, or, at

best, relativism. Such an appeal shares all the defects of cultural relativism as a fully adequate ethical theory.

So, now, with these explanations and comments considered, we may return to the main point which is that the basic criterion in discourse for ethical conduct is the descriptive definition of a natural norm for conduct, or of some equivalent. This is the qualitative criterion. It determines the qualitative character of conduct for ethics, what is and what is not ethical conduct, and what is good and what is bad ethical conduct. *Define* means literally in Latin "determining boundaries of," and this is just what a descriptive definition does in ethical theory. It demarcates the boundaries of the field of ethics and the line between good and bad within the field.

Once these boundaries for good and bad are determined, then it is possible to think about better and worse within these boundaries. A descriptive definition determines what is good. But until one has determined what is good, it is not possible to determine what is better in terms of that good. You cannot have a quantity of nothing. You have to define first what you want a quantity of. If it is the quantity of good you want, you must first define your good. That is why a definition is the fundamental criterion of value in discourse. Having found that, then you can look for standards of better or worse in terms of your definition.

But let me leave to the next section a detailed study of ethical standards, where we shall have a specific definition of *good* to work from.

Definitions and Standards for Individual Hedonism

Now for hedonism, taken as including both pleasure and desire, good in most general terms is descriptively defined as that which constitutes satisfaction, and bad as dissatisfaction. It follows that good conduct is that which yields satisfaction, and bad that which yields dissatisfaction. But *satisfaction* is simply the general term for two quite different positive elements. It

consists either in the achievement of desire, or in consummatory pleasure; conversely, dissatisfaction consists either in the frustration of achievement or in pain.

These yield two distinct criteria, one for achievement and one for affection. (Affection is the psychological term for all feelings of pleasure and pain.) Since, however, in what may be called a free appetitive act, affection legislates over achievement in the consummatory field, these two criteria are closely related within a purposive structure. A free appetitive act is one in which there is no overpowering pressure from some outside drive other than that for the particular purpose which has reached its consummatory stage. If the thirsty geologist on reaching the spring does not have an overpowering feeling that he must get on with his work at once, he will relax and enjoy his drink at the spring to the full. This is what is meant by saying that in a free appetitive act, pleasure legislates over speed of achievement for reduction of the drive. This, as we emphasized earlier, is a very important fact for hedonism and something the earliest hedonists undoubtedly had in mind (though somewhat vaguely) in developing their theories.

Another point needs to be noticed at this time. As a result of recent developments in psychology, it is possible to describe a purposive act in either objective or introspective terms. The diagram of an appetition given in Chapter 2 was essentially in objective terms—in terms of an outside observer's description of the succession of acts a man or an animal performs in carrying out a total goal-seeking activity. But these successive actions can all (theoretically if not always actually) be correlated with the sensations and feelings and thoughts that a man has in the progress of his purposive act. And the report by the man himself of what he directly feels, thinks, and so forth in the progress of such an act would be his introspective report.

For instance, the geologist directly felt the quality and urgency of his thirst drive and would report it as "a feeling of intense thirst." His perception of the situation in which he found himself, he could vividly report, indicating the quality

of the dry desert heat, the colors of the rocks on the ridges about him, their disposition, and his estimate of their distances away. He could report the thinking that went on in developing his hypothesis for ascending the nearest ridge and the succession of anticipations resulting. He could report his decision to act on his hypothesis and start on the arduous climb and his sense that only its feasibility and the urgency of his thirst would have led him to make such a decision. And so on till he reached the spring, and then he could report on the satisfaction of getting there and the pleasure he found in drinking the cool water. In well written novels we find many such introspective descriptions—often very detailed and psychologically quite accurate.

Just how such introspective reports are to be correlated with the objective reports of the same purposive act is a controversial matter. The details of the controversy are interesting but not particularly pertinent to ethical problems. There is little question that the correlation is legitimate. Accordingly, unless otherwise stated, let us treat both desire and affection from now on in introspective terms, the better because these introspective feelings are presumably the ultimate qualities for these fundamental units of hedonic value. The feelings of achievement and frustration are then to be regarded as the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of desire, and the feelings of pleasure and pain as the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of affection.

The great strength of hedonism consists in the intuitive immediacy with which men assent to the positivity and negativity of these basic value feelings. Who would dream of calling pain or frustration good, unless some external consideration for some special reason was admitted to be for that time more important? To be sure, the enduring of pain and frustration may be good for showing strength of character—but only, of course, because pain and frustration are so bad that it takes a lot of adherence to this conflicting criterion of strong character to stand them. And who would fail to find achievement and pleasure good, unless, again, some other criterion temporarily

overrode them? But even then they would still be good and given up with regret. Here in the obviousness of these feelings, coming out of man's innate biological endowments and embedded in the very structures of his purposive behavior, is the great hold of hedonistic ethics. And the hedonist naturally on his view believes there are no external criteria that can in the final judgment legitimately legislate over those that maximize satisfactions and minimize dissatisfactions. With the definitions of positive and negative hedonic value as feelings of achievement or affection thus providing the qualitative criteria for hedonism, the next thing to ask about is the quantitative criteria. What makes for greater or less hedonic value?

Here I must stipulate another nominal definition for present and future convenience. This is that the term *standard* be used to mean a *quantitative criterion of value.* Definitions of value are, as we have seen, the qualitative criteria. Standards, we now define as the quantitative criteria.

There are, to be sure, innumerable ways of quantifying satisfactions of achievement and pleasure. The following, among others, have been suggested: that those satisfactions are better that are had by the more aristocratic members of a society, or by the more powerful, or by the wealthier, or the better bred; or that the more intellectual satisfactions are better, or the more aesthetic, or the more social, or the more spiritual. All these are ways of quantifying satisfaction and so are standards by our stipulation. But like arbitrary nominal definitions, these arbitrary ways of quantifying a value are irresponsible and ethically negligible. For how could the elevation of a man's birth increase or decrease his pleasures and achievements. It is as if a tall man were judged to have a greater pleasure than a short man—and we were to speak of a tall pleasure in contrast to a stubby one. These standards are clearly irrelevant.

Then how does one know when a standard is relevant? The answer turns out to be very simple. It is by reference to the defining characters of the descriptive definition which affords

the qualitative criterion of value concerned. If the defining characters of the definition are capable of being quantified, these are the basic relevant standards for that value.

Let us see, then, what the defining characters of affection and achievement are?

Take affection first. The descriptive definition for positive affection or pleasure can be stated as the sort of feeling that is common to consummatory acts, and for negative affection or pain the sort of feeling common to riddance patterns. Or, more simply, *positive and negative affective values are respectively pleasure and pain.* There is for this definition only the two characters, pleasure and pain. These are, as we all well know from personal experience, open to quantification. The mode of quantification is the same for both. So, we need develop only one, and the standards for the other will follow. Let us settle upon pleasure for this purpose.

How can the feeling of pleasure itself be increased or decreased? The answer is easy—by duration, intensity, and number. The longer or the more intense a pleasure itself (not by external criteria like the wealth or height of a person having it) or the greater the number of pleasures, the better. The geologist's pleasure in drinking the water was good, but add the coolness of a shady tree and the chance to sit and relax, and the number of these pleasures enhances the occasion still more.

A long hedonic tradition has fairly solidly corroborated these three standards as the basic or intrinsic standards for the quantifying of pleasure and pain. However, one of the most prominent writers in the hedonic tradition, Bentham, suggests seven standards: (1) intensity, (2) duration, (3) certainty, (4) propinquity, (5) fecundity, (6) purity, (7) extent.

Of these, the first, second, and fifth amount to our three. By *fecundity* Bentham means the probability of a pleasure's being followed by other pleasures. This standard implies that the greater the number of pleasures the better. But it adds the factor of probability which is not intrinsic to the quality of pleasure and so is irrelevant to pleasure itself as a definitional

hedonic criterion. Probability judgments are relevant to the correctness of anticipatory judgments for a purpose of achieving as much pleasure as possible from an act. Probability is relevant to achievement value, but not to pleasure itself, which is a consummatory value. Bentham was confusing the question of what are the standards of pleasure in itself with that of what are the standards for the achievement of pleasure. The two questions are quite different.

The same confusion rules out (3) certainty and (4) propinquity. These are relevant standards for the purpose of achieving pleasure on the part of any person. But they are not standards intrinsic to the quality of pleasure (or pain) itself. A nearby pleasure is no more a pleasure than a distant one, although the probability of attaining it may be greater. Nor does certainty increase the pleasure itself, being only the probability of 1.00 of its being attained.

As to (7) extent, here Bentham refers to "the number of persons to whom it extends," which engenders still other problems, namely, those regarding the relation of social to individual hedonism. It does imply, however, (like (5) fecundity) the traditional standard of number. But though a large number of pleasures clearly increases the amount of pleasure, it is equally clear that the number of persons among whom the pleasures are distributed is irrelevant to the amount of the pleasure. Hence (7) extent, so far as it involves the factor of social distribution is irrelevant.

Another suggested pleasure standard became prominent because it was added by another classical hedonist, John Stuart Mill. It was also earlier suggested by Plato, but from him it raises much less discussion, since he was not essentially a hedonist. Mill's suggestion was that pleasures also differ intrinsically as being of higher or lower quality. He thought that intellectual and aesthetic pleasures were higher than sensuous pleasures. "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied," he wrote, "than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied, than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different

opinion, it is because they only know their side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides." [3]

The assumption is that a person who has experienced both the sensuous and the intellectual pleasures will regularly prefer the latter. Those who have experienced only sensuous pleasures are ruled out as not being experts in this field and lacking in experience of both kinds of pleasures. Nearly all writers on ethics since Mill agree that Mill implicitly gives up hedonism so far as he insists on this standard. For it virtually erects another ethical standard legislating over the hedonic standards. The preference of an expert is set above the pleasures and satisfactions felt, no matter what their quantity. What, then, is the basis for this preference? This amounts to asking what definition of ethical good is being set up to legislate over pleasure? And this amounts to accusing Mill of giving up with his left hand the hedonism he presents so insistently with his right hand. To some writers it seems probable that Mill is here making a concession to a self-realization theory (cf. Ch. 8). If so, this was a confusing way of doing it. It would have been wiser to have pointed out (if it were true) that the hedonic standards only legislate so and so far and that beyond these limits a self-realization criterion takes over. But Mill does not take that approach. Moreover, apart from Mill's defects of method, he has a factual problem. It does not seem to be true that an intellectual man will always, where a choice is forced upon him, prefer the intellectual to the sensuous pleasures. Mill himself struggles with some troublesome exceptions to his principle.

In summary, the conclusion would be that there is no intrinsic standard of higher or lower pleasures. Whether pleasures are taken in intellectual activity, classic works of art, pulp magazines, sport, food, or sex, the means whereby the pleasures are taken are irrelevant to the pleasures themselves. There may be certain unpleasant consequences from some sources not had in others, and these would concern a hedonic moralist. It

[3] John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Everyman's Library, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1929), p. 9.

may be that pleasures in food and sex are often likely to have unpleasant consequences not so likely to attend the pleasures of art and intellect. If so, this is a matter for judgment under the standard of number of pleasures versus pains in a given period of life, a matter of prudence, to be taken up presently. The traditional three standards of intensity, duration, and number would appear to be adequate for any ethical judgment in hedonic terms, so far as consummatory values are concerned.

But we have the standards of desire or of the achievement values also to consider. What makes for greater or less satisfaction in achievement? Here we need a more detailed descriptive definition of achievement than has been given yet. And we shall have to refer back once more to the diagrams for appetition and aversion in the second chapter. An achievement is a process. It is the process of successful action from the emergence of the drive to its terminus in the reduction of the drive. And the feeling of satisfaction in an achievement is the feeling of continuous success in passing through the succession of acts required for the attainment of the goal in an appetition and for simple quiescence in an aversion. It will be recalled also that these subordinate acts are connected by the charge of the initial drive channeled through anticipations directing these acts toward the attainment of the desired goal. With these data in mind the following definition of an achievement can be given: *A complete achievement is a succession of acts by which a pattern of anticipatory or a pattern of apprehensive references charged by a drive attains the terminal object of the references, if they are anticipatory, or terminal quiescence, if they are apprehensive.* A person has a feeling of satisfaction in achievement, or of *success,* throughout such activity if it proceeds smoothly. He has a feeling of dissatisfaction, or *frustration,* if at any point the series of acts is blocked, so that he has to work out a way of overcoming the blockage.

With this as the descriptive definition of achievement value, what are the defining characters and which of them are open to quantification? For these will be the standards of achieve-

ment. The defining characters are the drives, the patterns of references, and the succession of acts towards drive reduction. Each of these is quantifiable.

Drives have degrees of intensity. The greater the intensity of a drive, the greater the achievement in satisfying the drive. It is more of an achievement to satisfy an intense thirst than a mild one, to satisfy one's main ambition than a passing impulse, to overcome a strong temptation than a slight one. For, in the last case, it takes a strong opposing drive to offset a strong impulse which you believe you should not yield to. Roughly speaking, the greater the effort required in attaining an end, the greater in one's judgment is the achievement. For effort means the energy put out, and energy comes from the drives.

But the intensity of a drive should not be equated with actual energy expended, but rather with the energy available if it is needed. It is the feeling of eagerness rather than the feeling of effort that indicates the intensity of a drive. The intensity of a drive gives the strength of a desire. The stronger the desire, the greater the value one places on the object desired, the more effort one is willing to put out in the attainment of the object, and the more effort one is willing to expend, or actually does expend, the greater the achievement.

Patterns of reference are quantified in terms of the extensity of the references. Patterns of reference here signify the anticipations and apprehensions that enter into purposive acts. Some of these are much more extensive than others. It is more of an achievement to satisfy an extensive desire than a limited one. It is more of an achievement for a doctor to perform a difficult operation than to remove a splinter, more of an achievement to write a book than an article, to perform the duties of a state governor than those of a county clerk. The greater the extent of a purpose in the acts a man performs and has to be prepared to perform, the greater the achievement as the purpose becomes realized.

Lastly, as regards the succession of acts performed in the

realization of a purpose, the greater the *speed and correctness* in carrying the purpose through, the greater the achievement. Speed and correctness are practically the same standard, for if an anticipatory hypothesis as to the means of attaining a goal is incorrect, that blocks the purpose at that point and diminishes the speed of achievement. If all the anticipatory sets are correct, the achievement is completed in the quickest possible time. And the dynamic structure of a purposive act is so organized as to bring about with correct references the speediest possible attainment of the terminal goal. The quicker the realization of a desire the better.

The degree of positive achievement value or *success,* then, is gauged by three standards intrinsic to a purposive act—by the intensity of the drive, the extensity of the objective references for the fulfillment of the purpose, and the correctness of these references or the speed of attainment.

Negative achievement value, or *frustration,* increases in proportion to the amount of blockage interposed between the emergence of a drive and the realization of the acts required for its quiescence. The greater the number of incorrect anticipatory and apprehensive sets and so the greater the delay in the completion of the purpose, the greater the frustration. Also the degree of frustration is increased with the intensity of the drive and with its extensity. The frustration of a very intense desire is worse than that of a weak one, and the frustration of a massive desire is worse than that of a trivial one. That is, the greater the degree and amount of purposive activity frustrated, the worse the frustration.

One more point as regards purposive standards. Clearly the greater the number of positive purposes or appetitions in a man's life, the better; and the greater the number of negative purposes or aversions, the worse. I said "clearly," and this standard will quite surely be intuitively acknowledged by everybody. But why should this be so? For the achievement of an aversive purpose is just as much of an achievement as that of an appetitive one. If the intensity of the drives is equal, and

the extensity of the references, and the speed of attainment, the success of achievement would be the same for getting away from a harmful object as for reaching an enjoyable one. Success in the fulfillment of an aversion is just as positive an achievement value as success in the fulfillment of an appetition.

The preference for appetitions over aversions, then, does not derive from achievement values. It comes, as a matter of fact, from the affective values. An aversion is felt as a negative desire, because it arises from the pain of a riddance pattern. Its purpose is to avoid pain, and the less pain the better. An appetition is felt as a positive purpose, because its terminal goal is a consummatory act of enjoyment. Its purpose is to attain its quiescence pattern, which is conspicuously pleasant. The tendency to maximize appetitions and minimize aversions within a man's life is thus not a new standard for purposive values. It is merely a particular application of the affective standard for maximizing pleasures and minimizing pains.

We are now ready to bring together the results of this section as regards criteria of value for the ethics of individual hedonism. There are two sets of criteria: the definition and standards for affective value, and the definition and standards for achievement value. If we allow purposive values to include both affective and achievement values (which is reasonable, seeing that both kinds of value fall within the articulations of purposive structures), then we can present the whole group of criteria in the following scheme:

Purposive Values

I. Affective Values
   A. Definition: { Positive value = pleasure
                  { Negative value = pain
   B. Standards
      1. intensity
      2. duration
      3. number

II. Achievement Values

A. Definition: { Positive value = success
Negative value = frustration

B. Standards

1. intensity of drive
2. extensity of references
3. speed or correctness of references (for increase of success)
4. delay or incorrectness of references (for increase of frustration)

To this scheme should be added:

III. In a free appetitive act, affective value legislates over achievement value: but with outside pressure from stronger drives, achievement legislates over affection.

When the value criteria for individual hedonism are presented in this manner, with provision for both (I) affective and (II) achievement values and for a principle (III) relating them to each other, then this form of individual hedonism is also a form of psychological hedonism. This formulation, being based throughout on available psychological results, affirms not only that these criteria descriptively summarize how individual men do act in their purposive behavior, but also how they ought to act for the maximization of their personal values. The "ought" comes from the corrective action of selective systems operating within purposive structures.

Men do act so as to maximize affective values in the consummatory field, and they tacitly indicate that they ought to act that way by their acceptance of the corrections for errors in maneuvering guided by the selective structure of the field. Likewise men do act to maximize the success of their achievements up to the attainment of the consummatory goal and tacitly indicate that they ought to act that way by their eagerness to correct errors of choice in accordance with the selective means-end structure of a purposive act. And the principle of legisla-

tion connecting the two value systems is also a description of how men do act allowing at the same time errors of action which are corrected by the selective systems controlling purposive drives. A stronger drive always has dominance over a weaker one, and the insistence for achievement by the stronger drive will overpower the full consummatory enjoyment in the quiescence pattern of a weaker drive, if the two come into competition for a man's action. If the geologist's drive to get home to camp is very strong, he will not stop to enjoy his drink to the full, but will gulp it and go right on.

When the basis for a hedonistic ethics is a psychological hedonism, the theory is as strongly sanctioned as possible. It appeals for the support of its standards of conduct to the empirical results of psychological and physiological research. To deny these standards is to deny established scientific theories and the data confirming them.

With the hedonistic theory thus well grounded psychologically so far as single purposes are concerned, let us see how it works when a number of purposes come up for fulfillment together and compete with one another. This is the area of prudence.

Prudence

Prudence has to do with an individual's concern for the consequences of his actions according to his personal values. Pleasures do not come as isolated occurrences in a man's life. They are bound in with the physiological operations of his body and with the causal texture of his environment. Indulgence in a pleasant episode may lead to unpleasantnesses so great that he quickly regrets the indulgence. A prudent man looks to the consequences of his acts and aims to maximize his pleasures and minimize his pains for the long run.

Similarly for achievement values. Desires do not come separately as a rule. Usually a number of desires compete simultaneously for a man's actions, and he has to choose which to

follow. Over a period of time, how will he best distribute his activities so as to get the maximum satisfaction for all of these desires? A lawyer arrives at his office and there is his mail to be answered, a client telephones for an interview as soon as possible, there is a half finished brief for a case coming up within a week, he has a dentist's appointment at 3:00 P.M., his wife wants him to get theater tickets for a play that evening, and he would like to have a leisurely lunch at his club that noon. How are all these desires to be distributed through the day for the maximum accomplishment? What will be his most prudent line of action?

According to the individual hedonist, a man estimates the effects of alternative lines of action, in terms of the criteria summarized in the previous section, with a view to getting the greatest amount of satisfaction possible for the totality of his drives and enjoyments. The act that would give him the greatest satisfaction, all consequences considered, is the act that he ought to perform.

Moreover, the act that he ought to perform, the ideal prudent act, is one that, according to the findings of psychological hedonism, his very drives themselves direct him to perform. He can easily make errors of judgment, but these errors are all of the sort described earlier. Some drive is frustrated unnecessarily and presses for fulfillment. Some enjoyment is delayed or restricted. These are all pushing for a maximum satisfaction. And if a man acts imprudently, all these frustrations and blocked gratifications rise up within him demanding their fulfillment. Notoriously, it does not take much argument to persuade a man to be prudent. An imprudent act institutes its own punishment within a man's own body, and as an intelligent person, he wants to do better and generally learns to do better. This is where reason comes in for an individual hedonist.

We are not, it should be observed, speaking about the social hedonist yet. This sort of hedonist will be discussed in the next chapter. But for an individual hedonist, reason reviews the consequences of action and makes a hypothesis as to what is

the ideal action for giving the greatest personal satisfaction. Reason thus guides action where many drives are competing for satisfaction, just as an anticipatory set guides action towards the goal in a single appetitive purpose.

A man's reason may, of course, be in error. But if an individual hedonist has used all the knowledge he possesses of the possible consequences of his act and acts on that basis, he will be judged to have performed the rationally right act for him, though (as the consequences will show) this was not actually the right act. That is, the man need have no regrets for his action, since he acted as prudently as his knowledge permitted. But, for reasons he could not have been aware of, his act was actually wrong, and he would want to correct it. Thus a man might accept a certain position where his salary, his duties, and everything seemed satisfactory, only to discover that his employer had an impossible temper. His taking the job was a rationally right act, but he found later that actually it was a wrong decision.

So, an ethical distinction needs to be made between a rationally (or subjectively) right act and an objectively right act. The former is right in terms of the best judgment the agent could make on the basis of an ethical criterion. The latter is what would actually be right in relation to that criterion. This distinction holds for many other ethical theories besides hedonism. It is close to the distinction between a good intention and a good act. But for a good intention to be rationally right, it must be a considered act. A careless act with no bad intention, or a thoughtless act with the best intention, is not a rationally right act. For in acts like these a person has not used his head—that is to say, his reason.

So, for the individual hedonist, the opposition of impulse to reason comes into prominence. Imprudent acts are frequently acts where impulse overcomes reason. In terms of psychological hedonism, how is this apparently common fact accounted for? A man knows well enough he shouldn't take another martini, and definitely not three more with the head he'll have next

morning and the important appointment he has at 9:00 A.M. But the pleasure of the moment overrides the apprehension of discomfort and ineffectiveness next day. Like as not, he has no uncertainties about these penalties for his indulgence. It is very hard to restrain a strong impulse by reason.

Actually reason alone—in the sense of predictions, hypotheses, deductions and the like—has no power to restrain at all. It is simply a channeling of thought processes. The extraordinary thing for psychological hedonism is that reason in some sense or other could ever restrain impulse. What in fact can this reason be that ought in prudence to legislate over the impulse of the moment? It consists in learning to fear the bad consequences of acts on principle and as a deep-lying habit or disposition of the personality. Prudence as a rational criterion becomes thus emotionally charged and takes on the function of a drive. Then reason in the form of drive-charged prudence can inhibit an impulse of the moment and furnish time to balance present satisfactions off against consequences to be expected. But this sort of dynamic prudence has to be learned. The individual hedonist would recommend that it be learned by self-discipline, and as a psychological hedonist, he would hold that there is a constant tendency for a man to develop this disposition to consider the consequences, for it is nothing other than the tendency of every intelligent animal to learn from experience.

In summary, prudence is the supreme criterion of ethical conduct for the individual hedonist. It consists in the maximization of satisfaction in view of the consequences of an individual man's acts. A man ought to act so as to obtain the greatest amount of satisfaction with the least amount of dissatisfaction for the span of his life.

Satisfactions are reckoned first in terms of the criteria for achievement toward the avoidance of pain and the attainment of terminal goals. But since the terminal goal of a goal-seeking drive is a consummatory activity where pleasure may be maximized, and since pleasure legislates over achievement in the

consummatory field unless a stronger purpose than the one completed demands precedence, it follows that the most satisfactory life for the individual hedonist is one in which the largest possible amount of pleasure is obtained. Pleasure is thus the crowning value for the hedonist, even though it is not the only motivating agent, nor the only source of satisfaction. A life of great achievement without much pleasure would still, for one who professes broadly-based hedonism, be a life of great positive value, but it could have yet more value if a quantity of pleasure were added to it. If a man in the conduct of his life has unnecessarily sacrificed pleasures he might well have had in order to increase his achievement, this man, according to the individual hedonist, might have planned his life more prudently. For, other things being equal (and that means here the equal intensity of competing drives), the satisfactions of pleasure are superior to those of achievement.

Limitations of Individual Hedonism

Individual hedonism is a frankly egoistic ethics. This becomes the proper place, accordingly, to open up the much debated issue of egoism versus altruism in ethics.

There is one sense of egoism according to which the very conditions of human motivation make all conduct egoistic. That is the sense in which every human act of conduct must originate in the organism of an individual man and be motivated for the satisfaction of that man's specific purpose. For acts of conduct are purposive acts and consequently the acts of individual men, who strive by the very nature of their purposive activity to satisfy their purposes. So, of course, every man strives to maximize his own satisfactions. In that sense all acts are egoistic. But this is an empty sense of egoism. It is mentioned only to get it out of the way, so that it will not interfere with the more central issue.

The central issue has to do with the aims of conduct, not with its source of motivation. The source of motivation is always in

the individual man. But the aims are by no means always solely for the individual's satisfaction. Among man's repertory of drives, some are purely egoistic, but many are altruistic. The satisfactions of hunger and of thirst are purely egoistic, but that of sex is partly altruistic, and that of mother love largely so. That is to say, these latter drives can only attain satisfaction for the individual by giving satisfaction to others. And these are among man's basic or instinctive drives. When we turn to acquired drives, learned through acculturation for carrying out social roles or developed in accord with the ideals of the rational individual hedonist through prudence and self-discipline, these are mostly altruistic and have to do with getting along with other people. In short, an individual hedonist is just as altruistic as any other moralist if you are speaking of his drives, both instinctive and acquired. He is as much a social animal as a cultural relativist who immerses himself in socially directed behavior, and he would be just as unhappy as the latter in solitary confinement or if ostracized from his society completely. So, on this score also there is no real issue of egoism versus altruism. Some purposes are totally egoistic in their aims, some in various degrees altruistic. On the whole, individual hedonists have just about the same repertory of drives, both egoistic and altruistic, as any other moralists.

The real issue arises over the range of application of ethical standards. Individual hedonism limits the area of conduct to which ethical criteria apply to that of the individual performing the acts. This is, however, not an ethical absolutism. It does not declare that right conduct is only that which maximizes my own satisfactions. It is an individual relativism. It affirms that right conduct is that which for any individual maximizes his satisfactions, and what is right conduct for one man might not be right conduct for another.

The sanctioning and persuasive force behind this egoistically limited range of application for the ethical standards of individual hedonism is very strong. And this school is somewhat justified in priding itself on its hardheadedness. Its sanction comes

from the psychology of human motivation, when this ethical theory bases its evidence, as we have shown with present data it well may, on a psychological hedonism. If anyone has become convinced that this ethical theory is indeed soundly based and that purposive behavior does as a selective system generate its own standards of value, then he begins to wonder what could be wrong with it.

The first reaction of almost every student of ethics on encountering individual hedonism is that it must be an immoral theory. To a student socially acculturated within usual cultural patterns, this reaction is almost inevitable. The next reaction, when the force of the theory begins to tell, is that it must be impregnable. Both reactions on later reflection will probably be thought excessive.

As to its immorality, this judgment comes from associating morality with socially-imposed obligations and thinking that an egoistically-directed ethics must be undisciplined, selfish, brutal, and lascivious. One has, however, only to read the teachings of the outstanding classical exponent of individual hedonism, Epicurus, to become undeceived about this conception of the theory. A gentler, kindlier character is scarcely to be found in the whole history of ethics.

Just consider for a moment what prudence would dictate to a man endowed as man is with both egoistic and altruistic instincts, and suppose him uncontaminated with the superstitions and conventions of a cultural pattern. One of the great advantages of this sort of ethics, according to Epicurus, is that it releases a man from all the fears and superstitions of a dogmatic religion. Morality is no longer dictated to a man as a blind duty. Man is free to be as happy as he can, with his eyes open to the natural consequences of his acts, in a natural environment subject only to natural causes. Epicurus warns against intense pleasures as being particularly prone to unpleasant aftereffects. He recommends a life of moderation. A person needs a peaceful and pleasant environment for his greatest happiness. A person must, then, surround himself with friends. To

have friends one must be friendly to others. Such a life of moderation and sociability would, according to Epicurus, be the life of a hedonist. And this teaching would seem quite consistent with prudence. Indeed, some believe Epicurus could have indulged pleasures rather more liberally than he did and still have remained within the bounds of prudence. Reading him, one does not find anything suggestive of undisciplined impulse, lust, or even voluptuousness or sensuality, nothing of what people call paradoxically "epicurean." On the contrary, one finds soberness and friendliness.

The other best known individual hedonist in our literature, Omar Khayyam, recommends a more sensual and voluptuous life, but still on the whole a restrained and prudent one, and, in terms of this philosophy, equally wise. The two men may have differed in temperament, or perhaps the times and social conditions made the difference.

If, then, this way of life is not immoral in some obviously objectionable sense, what is the matter with it? Why is not it an ideal ethics?

Two serious criticisms may be brought to bear on it. The first has to do with the development of destructive drives in an individual. Individual hedonism generally assumes a well-balanced, thoroughly rational individual, who is in control of his impulses and has the intelligence to foresee the effects of his actions. But suppose a man has contracted, say, a drug addiction. Here is a dominating drive demanding daily satisfaction. Obviously, it produces a lot of conflicts with his other drives. It leads him into conflicts with other individuals and to act in ways which society calls criminal. He robs, he may even murder, to obtain the drug. Yet with the organization of this man's impulses, it would be hard to show that a robbery under the circumstances was not for him a prudent act. All consequences considered, was not this his best chance for maximizing his personal satisfaction?

What, however, is the inevitable result for him, if we assume that the addiction is incurable? It is a life of constant frustra-

tion, fear, very little pleasure, and almost continuous misery. In terms of maximization of satisfactions, it is the best he can do, but it is hedonistically a bad sort of life.

In such an illustration, the first criticism of individual hedonism is implied by the observation that this is not the ideal life Epicurus or Omar Khayyam had in mind, yet it is wholly consistent with the criteria of psychological hedonism. How can an individual hedonist avoid the dilemma that although this poor addict is maximizing his satisfactions to his best abilities, he is making a bad hedonic job of his life?

It may be answered that he should not have let himself become an addict to begin with. But perhaps he could not have helped it, perhaps he had not known the consequences. Think how many people are acculturated into less serious habits injurious to their happiness which they could not have helped acquiring, and which they cannot seem to break, or perhaps, as complexes in the unconscious, do not even know they have?

The implication of all this is that the individual hedonist is assuming, without having noticed it, another ethical criterion besides that of the greatest amount of satisfaction of his drives and purposes. This is the criterion of the balanced, well-integrated personality. Given an intelligent, emotionally well-balanced man, individual hedonism will realize a rich and happy life. But this involves another criterion besides the summation of satisfactions—namely, integration, which is the pivotal criterion of the self-realization theory of ethics to be considered later. And the self-realization theory consistently followed-through does not restrict the range of its criteria to a single individual as individual hedonism does.

This leads to the second criticism of individual hedonism. A drug addict or other socially obstructive individual would sooner or later find himself subject to social compulsion. In short, social standards would be brought to bear upon him. And these are factually sanctioned—as we saw in considering cultural relativism—as much as purposive satisfactions are. The necessity of expanding hedonism beyond the individual to society has for

this reason been recognized by nearly all the later and more critical hedonists. An adequate hedonistic theory cannot stop with individual hedonism but must try to establish itself as a social hedonism. So, out of consistency with its own egoistic standards inexorably followed through, individual hedonism seems to lead into a recognition of the need of social standards to protect men from destructive and insane individuals and to provide an environment for the development of reasonable persons of farsighted prudence. But with the recognition of the need for such social standards comes social hedonism, the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL HEDONISM OR UTILITARIANISM

The Social Justice and Greatest Happiness Principles

THE PRIMARY TENET of social hedonism is that the value of a satisfaction is the same whether it happens to be yours or mine. In reckoning up the goodness of an act, you must consider its effects upon the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of other persons just as much as its consequences for yourself. It would be unjust to give preference to your own satisfactions. This is the Social Justice Principle.

Granted the Social Justice Principle, the Greatest Happiness Principle follows. The usual statement of the Greatest Happiness Principle is that the goodness of an act depends on its giving the greatest happiness to the greatest number. This is the grand principle underlying the political philosophy of individualistic democracy.

To a socially minded person, these two principles will generally appear perfectly rational once he acknowledges that satisfaction is the unit of value. They may even seem self-evident. Yet obviously these two principles have widely expanded the ethical horizon beyond the egoistic confines of individual hedonism. Actually the definition itself of satisfaction

has been somewhat altered by the introduction of the Social Justice Principle. For in individual hedonism there was a tacit assumption that the pleasures and achievements referred to as the units of value were those embedded in the purposive structures of human conduct. Pleasures and desires occur only in individual persons. I cannot feel your pleasure, nor you mine. I may be pleased with your happiness and distressed at your suffering. But I do not myself feel your pleasure upon receiving a civic honor; nor, sympathetic as I am with your suffering, do I actually feel the pain of your toothache. The pain I feel is that of sympathetic distress, not that of a toothache. Pleasures and pains exist only within the bodies of separate individuals. There is no literal sharing of pains or pleasures. Different individuals may literally share the same boat for a pleasant sail in the harbor, but they cannot literally share the pleasures of the sail. My pleasure arises in my body from the freshness of the air on my skin and the thrill of the heeling boat in my exhilaration, yours comes from the sensation of your skin and your emotion. And similarly with desires. Never are your desires literally mine, though we may co-operate so that both of us may have the satisfaction of an achievement. But your satisfaction in the achievement is never literally mine. Satisfactions, whether those of affection or achievement, literally occur only to individual persons. This is an intrinsic trait of all pleasures and pains, successes and frustrations.

So, when the satisfactions of other persons are put on the same level as one's own, a shift in the definition of satisfaction has taken place. The feeling of satisfaction has been deprived of one of its intrinsic traits, namely, its belonging to an individual person. This is an intrinsic trait—a trait that cannot be removed without destroying what it is a trait of—because when you deprive a pleasure or a desire of its attachment to an animal body, you deprive it of its very existence. There simply does not exist a disembodied pleasure or desire.

This fact is further demonstrated by the manner in which pleasures and desires spontaneously modify and adapt to one

another within any single person's behavior—in the area of prudence. It does not take outside compulsion to induce a man to be prudent in the light of his own desires and enjoyments. The reason for this is that the laws of learning—trial-and-error activity and conditioning—operate only within an individual person's body. It is the individual who feels the blockage of his desire and the punishment of frustration, applies the techniques of learning, feels the reward of success, and learns by the process of conditioning. No person can learn for another person. The success of my trial-and-error activity cannot induce a conditioning in your body. You have to perform your own conditioning.

Of course, through the power of language you can be informed of what I have learned by trial and error, so that you do not have to go through the trial-and-error process yourself. But still you have to perform your own conditioning by memorizing the information I give you. There is no literal way in which one person can learn for another.

Yet it is through learning that one purposive activity becomes literally affected by another. I become afflicted with poison oak. Forever after, whatever my purpose may be, if that purpose leads me towards a thicket of poison oak, I modify it and give the thicket a wide berth. I am spontaneously prudent from the learning of my own experience. Within the individual sphere of prudence, pleasures and desires spontaneously modify one another through learning from the individual's experience.

Nothing like this goes on between the pleasures and desires of one individual and the pleasures and desires of another. My desires can influence your desires only by external compulsion of punishment or reward, or by acculturation, which amounts to the same thing. There is a gap between the satisfactions of one individual person and the satisfactions of another person.

Accordingly, when the social hedonist presents his basic principle of social justice, he is virtually propounding a new definition of hedonic value. He is defining positive value as satisfactions irrespective of their intrinsic character of embodiment in

individual persons and their enmeshment in the laws of learning. Here the social hedonist clashes with the individual hedonist, who insists on observing in his ethical theory the limited locality of a physical body where alone satisfactions can occur and the limited extent of the spontaneous effects of satisfactions upon one another in the area of prudence.

Social hedonism alters this individual-centered definition of satisfaction by affirming the Social Justice Principle, which thus becomes the qualitative criterion of value for this ethical theory. And the Greatest Happiness Principle is the quantification of the new definitional character introduced by social hedonism through its Principle of Social Justice—namely the expansion to a number of individuals—the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It constitutes a new value standard.

This new standard makes a big change in the outlook of hedonism. There are, however, no other vital changes upon individual hedonism. All the standards for affection and achievement developed within individual hedonism are carried over into social hedonism, but expanded to apply to any number of persons, not just to the person experiencing a particular satisfaction.

Moreover, there is a recognition on the part of social hedonism that satisfactions can be modified only within the bodies of individual persons. This comes out in the principle of social sanctions. Social sanctions are to social hedonism what prudence is to individual hedonism. They institute a sort of social prudence. This social prudence is laid on top of consideration of natural consequences which is the substance of individual prudence. It is the imposition of certain artificial consequences so as to induce individuals to conform to the requirements of the Social Justice Principle out of individual prudence.

The Social Sanctions

It is customary in the tradition of social hedonism to call attention to four types of social sanctions: the civil, the appro-

bative, the religious, and conscience. The first three impose external compulsion on an individual and are known as external sanctions, the fourth is a disposition within a man's personality and is known as an internal sanction.

The Civil Sanction. This sanction refers to the operation of the police, the courts, fines, imprisonment, and all other implements of legal compulsion. It includes legislation and the whole institution of political government. These are means of making it immediately worth a person's effort to act for the long-range good of a society, after the manner in which legislators and administrators carefully considering the consequences to the community determine what is to the people's greatest benefit and safety.

You may have a strong impulse to speed your car up to eighty miles an hour. But experience has shown that this is a dangerous rate of speed and is likely to lead to collisions with other cars. In the exuberance of your impulse you might not think of that nor of the statistics that demonstrate the danger. But if you are aware that traffic cops patrol the roads and that there is a severe fine for speeding, you will find it prudent to remain within the law.

The civil sanctions are artificial consequences imposed by the political institutions of a society to make it prudent for a person to act according to social justice with a view to the natural consequences upon others. By artificial means individual prudence is made to correspond with social prudence. And there is a general aim in social hedonistic theory to make the artificial consequences imposed sufficient but no greater than necessary to deter a person from committing the offence—in Gilbert and Sullivan terms "to make the punishment fit the crime." It would be considered socially unjust to imprison a man for a first offence of speeding. A fairly stiff fine generally induces the necessary prudence. But, if he is caught again, the fine goes up, and he may be deprived of his license for awhile. The principle is to make the artificial consequences sufficient to compel a man's respect for the interests of others to be equal to his concern for his own.

But to punish him to excess would violate the Greatest Happiness Principle, since it would deprive him of opportunities of satisfaction unnecessarily and so reduce the general happiness.

The rationale for the imposition of social sanctions is particularly clear in the sphere of the civil sanction, for laws and regulations are under constant rational surveillance by legislatures and judges and are relatively easily modified if they are not working properly. I am, of course, referring here to the political procedures of predominantly democratic societies, which follow, on the whole, the principles of social hedonism.

Approbative Sanction. This is the sanction of public opinion. It consists in the pressure of the community upon the individual to act in ways the community approves. This pressure compels the individual to consider the interests of others on penalty of disapproval and with the reward of approval if his acts are greatly to their satisfaction. The demands of this sanction are not formally codified, and the pressure is not administered through fines and physical confinement. The pressure is simply that of the opinion others have of you, the black looks they give you, and their avoidance of you, or the bright looks they give you, their eagerness to have you with them, and the confidence they show in you by putting you in positions of respect and responsibility. This sanction works upon a man's reputation which he usually wishes to be high in his community.

One might think that a sanction so physically insubstantial would not be a very strong one. Actually it is much stronger than the civil sanction. It is in the long run the most effective of all the social sanctions. If a law comes into conflict with the approbative sanction, it is the law that gives way, not public opinion. The fate of the Eighteenth Amendment to the American Constitution is a prime illustration of the power of the approbative over the civil sanction in a democratic society.

The approbative sanction, however, does not by any means always conform strictly to the Social Justice and the Greatest Happiness Principles. The social hedonist can only say it ought to, and that when it does it is the most powerful sanction in

support of these principles. He may also say that in some way or other public opinion tends over the long run to approximate the ideal of the Greatest Happiness Principle. We will go further into this problem in a later section.

The Religious Sanction. The sanctioning power of a religion is obvious. The social hedonist, however, would not endorse the sanctioning of any religious creed but only of those creeds which embrace social hedonistic ethics. J. S. Mill in his *Utilitarianism* argues that a justifiable religious creed could only be one that included a justifiable ethics which is in his view social hedonism. He intimates that Christian ethics is really of this kind and so might be the ethics of other religions. He asks how a perfect God could be other than a completely benevolent God and how a benevolent God could be other than one who desired the greatest happiness for the greatest number of his creatures. So a true religion would be one that incorporated the ethics of social hedonism. Such a religion would be a strong supporting sanction for this ethics.

Of course, any religion that was deeply embedded in a society would enter into the society's approbative sanction also. But an institutionalized religion has sanctions of its own in terms of expiation, excommunication, and the like, which are not civil sanctions nor purely approbative.

Conscience. This is also a very effective sanction. But again for a social hedonist it must be a good conscience in his terms, one that supports the principles of social hedonism. A social hedonist would not in consistency hold that conscience is a divinely-given faculty with an infallible judgment of good and evil. This belief would turn a hedonist into an ethical intuitionist, with whom we shall be concerned in a later chapter (Ch. 11, pp. 238 ff). For then a right act would not be one that maximized satisfactions, but rather one that conformed to the authority of conscience.

A hedonist would accordingly hold with the current psychological and anthropological theories that conscience is acquired and that it is the embodiment within the personality of the cul-

tural pattern of a person's society. Conscience is developed in the child by his parents and by all the social influences brought to bear on him.

J. S. Mill gives a summary statement of the origin and nature of conscience in the following passage which stands up very well with the data accumulated since Mill wrote:

> The internal sanction of duty whatever our standard of duty may be, is one and the same—a feeling in our own mind; a pain, more or less intense, attendant on violation of duty, which in properly cultivated moral natures rises, in the more serious cases, into a shrinking from it as an impossibility. This feeling, when disinterested, and connecting itself with the pure idea of duty, and not with some particular form of it, or with any of the merely accessory circumstances, is the essence of Conscience; though in that complex phenomenon as it actually exists, the simple fact is in general all encrusted over with collateral associations, derived from sympathy, from love, and still more from fear; from all the forms of religious feeling; from the recollections of childhood and of all our past life; from self-esteem, desire of the esteem of others, and occasionally even self-abasement. This extreme complication is, I apprehend, the origin of the sort of mystical character which, by a tendency of the human mind of which there are many other examples, is apt to be attributed to the idea of moral obligation, and which leads people to believe that the idea cannot possibly attach itself to any other objects than those which, by a supposed mysterious law, are found in our present experience to excite it. Its binding force, however, consists in the existence of a mass of feeling which must be broken through in order to do what violates our standard of right, and which, if we do nevertheless violate that standard, will probably have to be encountered afterwards in the form of remorse. Whatever theory we have of the nature and origin of conscience, this is what essentially constitutes it.[1]

Conscience operates primarily through the painful feeling of guilt and later of remorse at the violation of its dictates. At first it is the parent who tells a child what he should or should not do, who rewards him with affection if he is good and punishes him

[1] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government* (Everyman's Library, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1929), p. 26.

if he is bad. With the development of conscience a child incorporates the parental authority into his own personality, and then he punishes himself with guilt and remorse if he violates his conscience. Where formerly he would reach for the jam pot if he thought his parents were not around to punish him, now, if he reaches for the jam pot his conscience comes into operation and if his conscience has become strong enough, it inhibits the impulse. Thus the child has become socially responsible, can be relied upon to obey the rules of right and wrong to which he has been brought up, and no parent or policeman has to be near to see that he conforms. Actually, his personality has been transformed so that he finds it individually prudent for him to act as his society requires. To maximize his individual satisfactions he avoids the pangs of conscience and thus automatically follows the Social Justice and Greatest Happiness Principles.

There is, however, a big "If" in this happy consummation. Conscience will operate to guide a person's acts in accordance with Social Justice and the Greatest Happiness Principles only *if* the child has been brought up that way; and his parents and all the other important moral authorities influential in the child's bringing up are only likely to bring him up that way *if* the cultural pattern of the society has been established on the principles of social hedonism. That is to say, the approbative, civil, and religious sanctions must all already have been securely modeled on the principles of social hedonism if the inner sanction of conscience is also to be modeled on those principles.

Consistent with the psychological grounding of social hedonism, it is possible for a conscience to be bad. Not bad in the colloquial sense that a person "has a bad conscience" when he is feeling guilty for having violated it. But bad in the basic sense that a conscience may dictate acts that tend to minimize rather than maximize the general happiness. If a cultural pattern is full of superstitions and customs that breed needless unhappiness in a community, and a child's conscience has been developed so that he feels guilt whenever he transgresses one of these customs, then his conscience is, in the eyes of social hedonism, a bad

one. It is an agent for increasing unhappiness rather than decreasing it. A social hedonist could not be expected to endorse the conscience of a Dobuan tribesman on the description of the Dobuan cultural pattern given by Ruth Benedict.

Moreover, recent studies of the nature of conscience have revealed a characteristic of conscience which Mill could not have known about. This is its connection—or at least, its frequent connection—with the repressed area of the personality, often called "the unconscious." The repressions are purposive structures (or portions of them) generated usually, though by no means always, in early childhood as a result of experiences of intense conflict and fear. The conflict arises from a forbidden impulse. If the fear of the prohibition is very great, this fear automatically inhibits the impulse from coming up into consciousness, and a repressed impulse develops. The impulse, however, is still there pressing for satisfaction. But it is held out of sight of the main system of voluntary purposive acts. That is to say, it is not open to correction and rational co-operation with other purposes in the area of individual prudence. A repressed impulse is not open to voluntary control. A person generally does not know he has it even when he acts on it. His way of accounting for such an irrational involuntary act, when he has to account for it, is known as *rationalization*.

Now, by the very way in which conscience is inculcated by powerful parents and other authorities who place inhibitions on the strong impulses of a small child it is practically inevitable that sometimes the fearfulness of the inhibitions to the emotions of the little child will result in repressions. A child's conscience thus becomes partially rooted in his repressed system, and thereby becomes involuntary and rigid. It becomes an authoritarian conscience that can never be violated without guilt. Moreover, it can never be modified by learning, because it cannot be brought into the sphere of voluntary action and prudence. It becomes a rigid conscience.

These last statements do require the qualification that there are therapeutic means of removing repressions—not only those

connected with guilt and conscience but others not so connected. But the relevant point for social hedonism is that an acquired conscience is by no means always a reliable authority for moral action in social hedonistic terms. It is reliable only if it has been developed in a society acculturated throughout with the principles of social hedonism. Otherwise it will often dictate acts that are quite wrong by the standards of social hedonism.

As an illustration, the rigid Puritanical conscience has become in recent times notorious for its inappropriateness and immorality outside the limited area and era in which it originally developed.

Latter day hedonists and others have, consequently, been much more reserved in their endorsement of the sanction of conscience than Mill was in his *Utilitarianism*. They distinguish between a rigid authoritarian conscience and a humane rational conscience. The latter is a conscience freed from the rigidity of the repressed system. It is the organization of a man's habits of moral action under constant voluntary control in accordance with a man's highest moral convictions. For a social hedonist a rational conscience would be under the constant voluntary control of Social Justice and the Greatest Happiness Principle.

Looking back over these four sanctions, we cannot fail to notice that these are quite different in conception from the sanctions offered in support of individual hedonism. These latter are, we might say, natural sanctions. They emerge from the very description of purposive actions as these correct themselves in human behavior. The sanction for the correctness of trial acts in a goal-seeking purpose is whether or not they lead to the terminal goal, and the force behind this sanction is the purposive drive. This is the way such acts do go on and do acknowledge what they ought to be. Similarly the sanction for the correctness of acts of prudence comes from the convergence of the drives demanding a minimum of frustration in the line of action for a given occasion. The drives with their convergent tensions correct an imprudent act that increases the tensions out of their own dynamics. This is the way an individual does act correcting

mistakes of imprudence and minimizing the tensions of his personal situation.

But the social sanctions of social hedonism are artificial and are imposed apparently because of some deficiency of sanctioning power in the ethical principles of social hedonism. A man can easily see why he should seek the greatest efficiency of achievement, and why he should enjoy himself to the full where consummatory pleasures are available, and why he should plan a span of his life to obtain the greatest amount of satisfaction he can by prudent foresight. But it is not so clear why a man should respect the satisfactions of lazy vagrants, or of the shiftless slum dwellers across the tracks, or the supercilious rich in their mansions up on Ocean Heights, or the Communists across the seas who threaten his way of life, or the savages of the Amazonian forests whom he has only read about in the National Geographic magazine—why he should place their satisfactions on a level with his own according to the Social Justice Principle, or attempt to include their satisfactions with his in the pursuit of a Greatest Happiness for the Greatest Number.

There is a gap between the natural sanctions of the standards for individual hedonism and the principles set up for social hedonism. The social sanctions just enumerated would fill the gap if they were based on the principles of social hedonism. Once a society is acculturated to social hedonism, the social sanctions would work. But why should a society become culturally molded to the principles of social hedonism? That is the big question for this ethical theory. It is the question of how to bridge the gap between individual and social hedonism.

The Social Contract as a Bridge between Individual and Social Hedonism

The oldest proposal for bridging the gap is the social contract theory. There is a good statement of it in the Second Book of Plato's *Republic* where Glaucon is giving his description of a hedonistic ethics. It was developed in considerable detail later

by Hobbes in the *Leviathan* and by Locke in the Second Essay of his *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. Both of these writers imagined a state of nature for men before there was any social organization. This was in essence the conception of men living under the conditions of individual hedonism guided solely by individual prudence. Hobbes had an extremely egoistic conception of human motivation. In consequence, he inferred that such a state of nature would be a state of war, with every man in competition with every other man for what he needed and in constant fear for his life. His description of this state is famous in ethical literature and deserves quotation:

> Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and, which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.[2]

Hobbes argues that out of the discomfort of a state of nature, men find it reasonable, in terms of individual prudence, to be willing to give up some of the independence they have in the state of nature for the security they can obtain by banding together with other men who also see the advantage of mutual helpfulness. In this manner men enter into an agreement with one another and form a society. This is the social contract.

Once a man has entered into such a contract, he is bound by it. The act of entering the contract is voluntary. No man is forced to enter it. But after entering it a man is under obliga-

[2] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (Everyman's Library, London, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., and New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), Pt. I. Ch. XIII, p. 65.

tion to abide by it. And in order to make the social arrangement effective for security as intended, Hobbes argues that a strong social organization should be developed—for him a highly centralized one—which then acquires power to enforce a man's abiding by the contract and performing the duties which the security of the commonwealth requires.

In this manner through a voluntary act of prudence by an individual hedonist in entering into a contract with another individual hedonist, he and the other also become social hedonists and start instituting the social sanctions enumerated above for mutual security and peace. For in order to make the contract work, each must recognize the other's satisfactions as on a par with his own, and naturally they will seek to maximize the mutual satisfactions available.

Locke's bridging of the gap is very similar. He has, however, a much more liberal conception of basic human motivation. Man has altruistic as well as egoistic drives. The result is a much less hellish picture of the state of nature. It could be quite idyllic. One gets the idea that if only everybody could be reasonable, there would not be any need for the conventions of society. One can even see how an anarchist could come by his utopian ideal of men living sweetly together without social rules and compulsions. This would be the ideal hedonistic state of existence. Everyone would be completely free to do what he wanted with sympathetic understanding of the desires of everybody else for the same freedom. But it is only a passing glimpse. For Locke is too realistic to enlarge on so utopian an ideal. The bully, the incipient despot, or the dictator, is the devil in the state of nature. To be protected against him, men find it prudent to organize under a social contract, just as in Hobbes' theory.

More consistent than Hobbes as a hedonist, however, Locke makes careful provision against the rise of despots within the government instituted. Locke conceives a ruler as a trustee of the people who have contracted together. It is the ruler's duty to preserve the freedom of the people to the maximum consistent

with security. If he goes beyond this trust, he is a usurper, a bully from within the government, and the people are not obligated to him (for they never entered a contract to become slaves of a despot—no prudent individual hedonist in his right mind would do that), and the people are free to revolt against him as an enemy who has placed himself in a state of war against them. So, Locke sets up the framework of a decentralized representative government, with division of powers and checks and balances. This framework has become accepted as the political ideal of government consistent with social hedonistic ethics—the ideal form for an individualistic democracy. It has proved a realistic, workable ideal for many of the nations of the world.

There is an ethical and political concept associated with social hedonism and individualistic democracy as developed by Hobbes and Locke, and carried on by many others, that should not be overlooked—the concept of *natural right*. This concept has become enormously involved in the course of intense political dissensions and a heap of often pedantic scholarship. In most quarters it is customary today to regard it as a mistaken, meaningless, and dead concept. If the concept, however, is stripped of all subsequent accretions and minutiae of historical erudition and brought down to the way it functions in the ethics of Hobbes and Locke, it turns out to be an extremely vital and important ethical concept—as alive today as it was for these men. It calls attention to the natural norms dynamically functioning in every purposive act—to the ultimate values of immediate satisfactions in individual hedonism, which, if denied or neglected, would take the very insides out of social hedonism. It virtually states that the natural rights of the drives in individual hedonism are the substance beneath all the artificial rights that can be engendered by social hedonism. What Locke was, with good reason, fearful about is that once men have built their bridge by way of individual prudence from individual to social hedonism, some despot or apologist for despots will cut the bridge away and leave the people with the machinery of govern-

ment grinding on without check from the individual values that alone justify its institution.

Another way of bringing out this same principle for hedonistic political theory is that for hedonism a political organization is justified only as a *means* for maximizing individual satisfactions. The social contract is entered into only as a means whereby the men agreeing to it may obtain a greater amount of satisfaction than they could get separately in a state of nature. It follows (a well-worn individualistic slogan) that the less government the better. The more freedom of decision left to the individual in a society, on hedonistic grounds, the better. A further justification for this maxim is that in the very nature of purposive action, the person who has the drives and feels the satisfactions is the best judge of what will give him satisfaction. For, as we stressed repeatedly, drives and satisfactions have their seats in individual bodies. No one but the individual himself can literally experience the values of achievement and satisfaction. The more, then, a social organization can leave the matter of purposive decisions to the individual, the greater the chance of maximum happiness for all members of the society. Therefore, the more freedom from social compulsion the better, according to the principles of social hedonism.

Well, then, has not the social contract theory done what was expected of it—bridged the gap from individual to social hedonism and justified the artificial imposition of the social sanctions as means of increasing the general happiness of the members of a society as a whole?

In spite of the theory's reasonableness and the fact that a number of large modern nations have conducted their governments with rather marked success following the policies of social hedonists who generally accepted some sort of social contract theory, most recent critics do not believe the theory has performed the function expected of it. What do they find the matter with it?

I will skip over the minor criticisms such as the one that

there never was such a state of nature as Hobbes or Locke depict. The historical existence of such a state is irrelevant to the substance of the theory. For the substance of the theory is that a prudent extension of individual hedonism would of itself lead to a social hedonism by way of mutual understanding among a group of individual hedonists. It is offered by the contract theory as a fact that more satisfactions can be had by a group of persons by means of mutual co-operation and tolerance than by every man going egoistically on his own. This proposition has often been confirmed. So it is not matters of history that disturb the theory.

The chief difficulty is this, that the social contract theory does not actually substantiate the Social Justice and Greatest Happiness Principles. For these principles affirm that every person's satisfactions have to be set on a par with one's own. But the social contract theory affirms that one is obligated to consider only those with whom one has made the contract.

Then, if one asks what the sanction is for abiding by the contract if, as can easily happen, it is no longer to one's personal advantage to do so, the answer seems to be impossible to find in purely hedonistic terms. Why should not a man dodge the draft if he can do it successfully without being caught. For, of course, there are conditions when a man can with a little ingenuity get away with it. But, let us put the question in a still more embarrassing way. On the basis of hedonism what right has the society to force him into the army?

It may be said that once a commonwealth has been set up, the social sanctions will compel him to be drafted whether he likes it or not. This sacrifice demanded on his part is for the general welfare of the group, and so, even at the risk of his being killed, he is obligated to serve in the army. But how does this reasoning square with the contract theory of the state? He entered the contract voluntarily (according to the theory) on the understanding that the satisfactions would be mutual. He is now picked out, one as against many who are not drafted, to make a sacrifice he does not wish to make. Now on calm reflection the

contract does not appear to be as prudent an arrangement as it first promised to be. Just as he voluntarily entered into it, he now voluntarily decides to return to the state of nature. What, according to the contract theory of the state, can stop him or show him in error? The Greatest Happiness Principle is now useless. He, by hypothesis, does not share in this happiness for there is no mutual benefit. He risks the loss of all possible satisfactions for himself simply to secure the satisfactions of others. There is no prudence in that. To bring the illustration squarely up to the issue, suppose he is drafted for a mission with a suicide squad!

In short, there is no sanctioning power in the basic principles of social hedonism to overbalance the strong sanctioning power of prudence based on purposive drives, if ever the two come into conflict. And the dynamics or the attraction of the social contract theory as a means of bridging the gap from individual to social hedonism was that individuals will find it mutually prudent to give up some of their liberties in exchange for greater security and consequent satisfactions. If the contract turns out not to be prudent, the contract loses all its attraction and reason for being.

The facts of the matter, of course, are that once a man is caught up in the structure of his society, he cannot (except rarely) get out. He will be driven to conform and be so deeply acculturated that he will be willing enough to conform, even at great sacrifice of personal satisfaction. But these facts are no comfort to a social hedonist, for they give support to the superior ethical sanctioning of a cultural pattern and argue for the superiority of the ethics of cultural relativism.

It may be suggested that a man's conscience will lead him to accept the draft. For any well-acculturated man, this suggestion is true to the facts, but again it plays right back into the hands of the ethics of cultural relativism since, as we saw, conscience is the personal embodiment of a man's cultural pattern.

Hobbes had some inkling of the impact of these difficulties upon his social contract theory and makes a brief slanting appeal

to *consistency* as a sanction for abiding by a contract once entered into. In the *Leviathan,* Part I, Chapter XIV, he writes: "For as it is . . . called an absurdity to contradict what one maintained in the beginning; so in the world it is called injustice, and injury, voluntarily to undo that which from the beginning he had voluntarily done." The implication is that it would be a sort of inconsistency for a man to enter voluntarily into the social contract and then renege from the obligations implicit in the contract. But what sanctioning power is there in formal consistency if a man has ceased to accept the premises?

Formal consistency has no weight as an ultimate ethical criterion. It is only a criterion for valid reasoning. Nothing could be more wrong in a matter of conduct than to persist consistently on an error of judgment, or on an unsound ethical criterion. When a man finds he has made a mistake in an act of conduct, the right thing always is for him to do some contrary act, never to continue consistently repeating the mistake. So, if a man has made a contract which he discovers he should not on ethical principles have made, then by these principles he ought immediately to dissolve the contract. For instance, if a man finds he has committed himself to a society which turns out to be a gang of kidnappers, and on his ethical principles kidnapping is wrong, then he should as quickly as possible separate himself from that society.

On the social contract theory for bridging the gap from individual to social hedonism, this sort of thing could easily occur. For the ethical principles on the basis of which a man is induced to enter upon the social contract are those for maximizing individual satisfactions. Well, if on joining the society the individual hedonist finds his individual pleasures diminished, then by the very ethical principles that led him to make the contract he should hasten to break it, for on those principles he made a mistake and did wrong. If there is an appeal by Hobbes to consistency, it should not be to an obligation to continue upon a disappointing contract, but to abide by the principles of prudence which were the original basis for the contract.

What this discussion brings out is that the one thing that can never be expected of a consistent individual hedonist is an act of great self-sacrifice for his or any society, and that there is nothing in the bare principles of Social Justice and the Greatest Happiness for the Greatest Number to induce an individual hedonist to make such a sacrifice. When reference is made to conscience and the facts of acculturation, the principles of social hedonism are automatically subordinated to the criteria of cultural relativism. Social hedonism cannot seem to stand on its own principles.

Rationality as a Bridge between Individual and Social Hedonism

Recent hedonists have generally abandoned the social contract theory as a bridge. R. B. Perry and a number of others make an appeal to rationality in their transition from an individual to a social interest theory.

The argument is simple and on the face of it entirely convincing. We saw earlier that a relevant ethical standard is derived from the quantification of the defining characters of the ethical value in question. If then value is defined in terms of interest, or satisfaction, it follows that the greater the amount of interest or satisfaction the greater the value. Therefore, since interests and satisfactions extend as far as there are persons having interests and satisfactions, automatically the principles of social hedonism are established. For every interest or satisfaction wherever it occurs is a value to be estimated on a par with any other (whence the Social Justice Principle), and the more, the better (whence the Greatest Happiness Principle).

The trouble with this bridge, of course, is that it fails to take account of the intrinsic dynamics of interests and satisfactions and the fact that they have their seat in individual organisms and not in a society as a whole nor in the human species as a class. Since this point was developed in some detail at the beginning of this chapter, we need not go into it again here. What

Perry missed is the fact that an intrinsic trait of all pleasures and purposive achievements is their belonging to an individual. Consequently, a satisfaction belonging to one individual cannot be simply added to a satisfaction belonging to another individual and make more value of satisfaction to either individual. And satisfactions that do not belong to any individuals do not exist, and so they cannot be quantified at all.

If individual satisfactions are to be quantified in over-individual terms, this has to be done by some special criterion that legislates over the hedonistic definition of value, at least sufficiently to compel different men under certain circumstances to recognize each other's individual satisfactions as on a par. Perhaps there is some social value that, combined with hedonic value, can justify in a qualified degree the ethics of social hedonism and the political philosophy of individualistic democracy that grows out of it. We shall see.

Some Other Traditional Difficulties with Hedonism

Individual hedonism, we saw earlier, is not a fully adequate ethics because it assumes a rationally balanced man to make it work. When men lose this balance social discipline is required, and thus social criteria are involved and legislate in some way over individual prudence.

This situation leads to an attempt to develop a social hedonism on the base of an individual hedonism. But no satisfactory bridge has been found. Although these difficulties do not eliminate hedonism as a very important contributing factor to ethical theory, they do make it difficult to see how it can ever develop into a wholly adequate ethics.

There are, however, two other important objections to the theory which should be mentioned. The first is an old and persistent one. It is that *pleasure* is a vague term and that pleasures cannot be calculated. This, when the theory is expanded to include achievement as well as affection, is not, it seems to me, any longer a very serious objection. The psychological laboratory

has developed a number of fairly accurate ways of measuring the intensities of drives and the success of achievements. Introspective reports about desires and satisfactions are less precise, but they are at least as reliable as quantitative judgments about the degree of warmth of a room in the absence of a thermometer. If the physiological correlate of pleasure and pain should be established, there is no reason why quite precise instrumental measurements could not be obtained for pleasures and pains. The difficulty of measuring something precisely is no argument against its measurability nor any reason to disparage such rough measurements or quantitative judgments as are available. So, the difficulty of measuring hedonic values can be set aside as an irrelevant objection. In the case of basic ethical values, these difficulties are merely technical and will be overcome with more extensive research.

The other objection that comes up against hedonism is really serious, however, though it affects only social hedonism. This is that the Greatest Happiness standard has no limit of application and sets no definite range of responsibility for the consequences of an act. Theoretically, every satisfaction of not only every man but of every animal who conceivably feels pleasures, pains, successes, and frustrations has to be taken into account in evaluating the rightness or wrongness of any act. Not only is this unlimited horizon of relevant consequences impractical, but there is no effective sanction for it. It is a generous gesture and infinitely democratic. But it is unrealistic. Here is where the theory of social hedonism may learn something of importance from the in-group out-group concept of cultural relativism. And, be it noticed, in the political philosophy of social hedonism, the horizon for maximizing satisfactions is restricted practically to that of a man's own society—to the group of men with whom he has made a social contract!

To bring this objection home to a reader, do you see any compelling reason why in tending your garden you should consider the interests of snails, sourbugs, lice, moles, and gophers who come in and destroy your plants? If not, why don't you?

They have their interests in your plants as much as or more than you have. On the Social Justice Principle their satisfactions are on a level with yours, and your acts in putting out poison and traps are quite surely lessening the amount of total satisfaction in the world rather than increasing it. It might be argued that insects do not have purposive values like men, since their behavior is of the chain-reflex type. But that excuse will not apply to moles and gophers and marauding birds.

Do you say that you cannot consider them because you cannot reason with them and enter into a co-operative agreement with them? That is an important point, but it amounts to a return to the social contract theory, which cannot be justified on purely hedonistic terms, and seems to require a recognition of a social criterion for ethical judgments which has a priority of some sort and legislates over the standards of a hedonistic ethics.

This does indeed seem to be the judgment one has to come to regarding the adequacy of a hedonistic ethics. This ethics is very strong up to the limits of prudence in individual hedonism. But individual hedonism cannot seem to justify by its principles the application of social discipline upon unruly persons. Yet social criteria do in fact legislate over men's private interests and correct unruly conduct. The action of these social criteria cannot be factually denied by individual hedonists and can only be denominated illegitimate criteria of conduct by them through arbitrary fiat. Hedonists have in general seen the necessity of recognizing a certain priority in social standards of conduct and have attempted to establish, accordingly, a social hedonism.

But now they enunciate principles that carry them to the opposite extreme from that with which they started. From limiting the range of ethical responsibility to the field of individual prudence they spread the range to the outermost limits of satisfactions, human and non-human. This expansion ignores the social factor in ethical conduct as seriously as individual hedonism does.

The social contract theory does have the merit of acknowledging the presence of an effective social factor. It limits the

range of a man's social responsibility to the boundaries of that society with which he has made his social contract; and the social sanctions called upon to maintain the social contract apply only within the boundaries of that society. But the acknowledgment of a binding force of social compulsion through these sanctions leads outside the principles of pure hedonism to a recognition of a social factor that can override the Social Justice and Greatest Happiness Principles.

Requiring a gardener or farmer to place the interests of his pests on a par with his own in raising his plants lifts to the point of absurdity an ethical theory that does not recognize the factor of social interrelationship as essential to a confirmable ethical theory. If this fact is recognized, then it would be possible to accept a basic contribution of the theory of cultural relativity—namely, that the boundaries of the effective operations of a cultural pattern are also the boundaries of the practical sanctions of moral obligations—and to combine this with the basic contribution of hedonism about the maximization of happiness. And then we would obtain an ethical theory to the effect that within the boundaries of a society determined by a cultural pattern, the Social Justice Principle and the Greatest Happiness Principle should (and, in fact, do) apply. But this would be a different ethical theory from either of those we have studied. Something like this we shall eventually perhaps be willing to support.

But the point that has come out in examining this difficulty which social hedonism has with its implication of an unlimited range of responsibility for acts of conduct is that with respect to any act of conduct there is always an out-group. There are always some persons or creatures to whom a man is not responsible in applying his ethical criteria. Only recently has it become appropriate for a man to think of the consequences of his acts on all men, so that his ethical judgment may be expected to have universal human application. But it is safe to predict there never will be a time when there will not be an out-group such as the farmer's pests. Any ethical theory that contains no principle for

determining the limits of the range of a man's ethical responsibilities is bound to be an inadequate theory.

Ethical Hedonism

Now for some remarks on ethical hedonism, as distinct from psychological hedonism. We have just seen the difficulties that hedonism has to face in trying to find factual confirmation for its social criteria in the psychological descriptions of actual behavior. It does seem extremely probable that these criteria cannot be empirically justified as ultimate ethical principles. Yet it would be most difficult to admit that they do not have a strong bearing on the legitimacy of ethical judgments. Some men incline to believe that they are the ultimate principles of ethical judgment in spite of the inadequacy of their empirical justification.

The classical hedonist, Henry Sidgwick, was convinced of this conclusion, and accordingly he justified hedonism by affirming the self-evidence of three principles—Justice, Prudence, and Rational Benevolence. Since he stated these principles (particularly that of Justice) with more care than any previous writer, it will be well to quote his formulation. For the Principle of Justice he gives: "It cannot be right for *A* to treat *B* in a manner in which it would be wrong for *B* to treat *A*, merely on the ground that they are two different individuals, and without there being any difference between the natures or circumstances of the two which can be stated as a reasonable ground for difference of treatment." He adds that "common sense has amply recognized the practical importance of the maxim; and its truth, so far as it goes, appears to me self-evident."

His statement of the Principle of Prudence is "that one ought to aim at one's own good on the whole." The Principle of Rational Benevolence he deduces from the other two. It is "that each one is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own, except in so far as he judges it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or

attainable by him." In view of the previous discussion of the importance of recognizing the limits of personal responsibility for conduct, the following remark of Sidgwick's is most relevant: "I think it may be fairly urged . . . that *practically* each man, even with a view to universal Good, ought chiefly to concern himself with promoting the good of a limited number of human beings, and that generally in proportion to the closeness of their connexion with him." [3]

These principles refer only to "right" and "good," but presently Sidgwick argues that pleasure is the only good, so that it is a hedonism that he is establishing by his self-evident principles. By appealing thus to self-evidence instead of to the empirical evidence of observed conduct, Sidgwick becomes an exponent of a theory of ethical hedonism.

But this amounts to the abandonment of the criterion of pleasure itself as the basis of ethical theory, and the substitution of the intuitive self-evidence of certain principles as the criterion. Sidgwick's is an intuitional theory of ethics, with the corollary that pleasure is the only element of human experience to which the self-evident principles apply.

It is not too much to say that an ethical hedonism is not a hedonism at all, or is a hedonism in disguise, supported by some sort of criterion like self-evidence or indubitable conscience which has nothing particular to do with pleasure or desire. We shall examine intuitive theories of ethics later (in Ch. 11) in considerable detail.

[3] Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (London, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1922), Bk. III, Ch. XIII, sec. 3.

CHAPTER 7

THE PRAGMATIC OR SOCIAL SITUATION THEORY

The Social Situation

WE FOUND THAT the great difficulty with cultural relativity lay in its rigidity, its inability to institute self-criticism, and particularly its inability to justify the moral acts of a reformer seeking to improve his society. So we turned to hedonism, the ethics for the dissemination of individual happiness. There we found that individual hedonism was inadequate because it failed to justify social control over unreasonable persons, and that social hedonism, which aims to provide such control, cannot seem to develop a tenable hypothesis for bridging the gap between individual prudence and social concern for the happiness of all. Cultural relativity appeared too rigidly social, hedonism too biased for the individual. The pragmatic ethics with its social situation theory seems precisely adapted to provide flexibly for both society and individual without disparagement of either.

The development of this theory is largely due to John Dewey. The action of the structure of a social situation in guiding human conduct was his great insight. Whether after studying his account one accepts it as entirely adequate or not, one will probably never neglect thereafter the contributions of his insight towards the practical solution of many, if not of all, ethical prob-

lems. He pointed out something so much on the very doorstep of our actions that we have walked right over it every day of our lives without noticing it. For we all do take for granted that there is a moral situation whenever we find we have got into one. But for generations men have never looked at the situation itself for moral enlightenment. Instead, standing in the situation, men have looked all about to find somewhere outside some criterion to help them out of their moral problem. It is Dewey's insight that the criterion for the solution of a moral problem lies in the situation itself in which a man finds himself. A problematic situation, when carefully analyzed, furnishes its own criterion for the solution of the problem contained in it.

What then is a social situation, and how does it perform its ethical function? These two questions with some final comments on the adequacy of a social situation theory to cover the whole field of ethics will constitute the substance of this chapter.

A social situation is an event in which a number of different persons are involved with purposes which require for their satisfaction the co-operation, or at least the consideration, of these various persons for one another. A social situation arises from the tensions of these various persons' purposes seeking adjustment to one another in a limited spread of time and space. The joint aim of all these purposes is the greatest release of the tensions possible in the situation, for the maximum total satisfaction available in it.

There is always a theoretically best act or series of acts for attaining this maximum of satisfaction within a social situation. There is thus an ideal moral act for the resolution of each situation. This ideal act is the moral criterion for judging the degree of correctness of whatever act is actually performed. The ideal lies implicit in the situation. It is different for every situation, for no two social situations ever quite duplicate each other's circumstances of occurrence. It can be discovered by a careful inquiry into the character of the situation—the personal, cultural, and physical features of it that constitute its structure. The rightness of an act is tested by the degree to which it re-

duces the tensions of a situation. An act is wrong if it increases the tensions. A correction of the act is then immediately and urgently called for. The dynamic sanction for the ideal act that will most completely reduce the tensions of a situation (the pragmatic ethical criterion) is the energy of the configuration of purposes demanding joint satisfaction in any particular situation.

For any student who has examined the difficulties inherent in the culturally centered ethics of cultural relativism and the individualistically centered ethics of hedonism, the pragmatic ethics of the social situation looks like the heaven-given solution of all our ethical problems. It is sensitive to both cultural and individual demands. It is not rigid but supremely flexible and invites the scrutiny of the intelligent social reformer. Starting as it does in a concrete social situation, it is not pestered with the gap between individual and social hedonism.

Let us then ask what are the main features of a social situation? They may be divided under five main headings:

1. The dynamic purposes demanding satisfaction.
2. The cultural environment within which these purposes arise.
3. The physical environment.
4. The consequences of possible acts in relation to (1), (2), and (3).
5. The boundaries of the situation set by (4).

Let us illustrate these features by an example of a simple social situation. A family living in a college town gave a college girl a room in consideration for her helping with the housework and doing some baby-sitting. She was conscientious and the family liked her. In the middle of the college term she fell ill with a high fever and symptoms which gave every evidence of being a serious case of influenza. As soon as the wife took the girl's temperature and appraised the situation, she said she would call up the college infirmary and have an ambulance sent down. The girl then became much concerned and refused to be

sent to the infirmary, saying she was a Christian Scientist and could not accept medical treatment. She begged to be allowed to stay where she was. This, of course, would mean a rather heavy responsibility laid on the housewife, a lot of extra work for an already busy mother, possible exposure of herself and the children. What ought she to do?

According to the pragmatic moralist, the criterion for the solution of the wife's problem lies implicit in the situation and can be discovered by inquiring just what are the relevant factors for determining an act that will most fully reduce the tensions involved. Immediately we see that a method of inquiry into the nature of a situation becomes an integral element in the theory. What is this method?

The Method of Inquiry into a Social Situation

The general formula for an act of inquiry, according to the pragmatic approach includes the following steps:

1. Discrimination of the stimulus which prompts the inquiry. This is important since it localizes the situation to be examined and determines the features relevant to the problem. The stimulus for the problem will lie within the situation to be examined. But presumably the situation itself relevant to the stimulated problem will extend considerably beyond the stimulus.
2. Observation of data and collection of other evidence relevant to the problematic situation.
3. Framing of a hypothesis for the resolution of the problem, a step which presupposes an organization of the evidence needed before a promising hypothesis can be worked up.
4. Inference from the hypothesis of a way of testing it.
5. Testing the hypothesis for its confirmation or disconfirmation.

If the hypothesis is disconfirmed, the process of inquiry is begun again to obtain and test another hypothesis.

This series of steps in the process of inquiry is put forward by Dewey and his school as applicable to any problematic situation

whether ethical or scientific or of any other kind. It suggests that there is nothing in principle different between a problem in science and one in ethics. In a broad sense any problem is an ethical and also a scientific one. A sharp line between scientific judgments and value judgments—which some schools try to draw—is denied by the pragmatic view. According to this view, the significance of science is its value to man. Science is as much a social institution as is a form of government or an industry and is based on purposive behavior. Hence it is a phase of conduct, and its problems in their ultimate impact are as deeply ethical as the incidental household problem of the wife with her college girl. This observation of the infiltration of values into the whole of life, and a resistance to all tendencies for the compartmentation of life, is an inherent characteristic of the pragmatic view of life and of its ethical position.

Let us now apply these steps of inquiry to the social situation of the wife and the sick girl. And let us watch for the conditions and concepts which emerge and will require special attention and detailed description for an adequate understanding of the ethics of the social situation.

The stimulating event precipiating the problem (Step 1) is clearly the symptoms of the girl's severe illness in the context of a family of which she is not a related member and her refusal to accept medical care.

What next are the relevant data (Step 2) that have to be taken into account? There are the immediate data mentioned above, which precipitated the situation. But these are only a handful out of the whole context of relevant matters that the wife has to consider. Some of these have already been mentioned in the earlier brief description of the situation. The girl is a deeply confirmed Christian Scientist of the most orthodox type. At least, she profoundly fears the disapproval of her church and of her own family on the subject of medical treatment, and her conscience is aroused. On the other hand, the scientific evidence is of a high order of probability that her sickness is due to a virus and that its consequences, if not blocked off by treatment accord-

ing to confirmed medical practice, may be serious and possibly even fatal. There is medical evidence of danger of infection to those in the household who have contact with a person sick with an influenza virus. The girl's parents live several hundred miles away. There is, to be sure, a Christian Science church in the town. There is the college infirmary and there are the college authorities. There is the family doctor. There is the wife's husband by now at his office absorbed in his own business responsibilities. Besides, the wife feels sure that his judgment would not differ in essentials from hers. And this problem has nothing in it related to his business. The Christian Science belief is a culturally admissible one. There is nothing legally or culturally reprehensible in the girl's attitude. The situation does not extend spatially much outside of the wife's family—at least as she stands by the girl's bed after discovering how high the fever is (actually 103°). The wife has had some experience with influenza in her own family and remembers pretty well what the doctor's treatment was.

On the basis of these data, what is the best solution of the problem? The wife leaves the girl for a while to think it over. She has to develop a hypothesis for a decision. In the given context, there is little doubt that an intelligent, well-balanced woman with experience of a good many household problems in a growing family (another relevant datum not explicitly mentioned in the previous paragraph)—little doubt that she assumes there is a best solution inherent in the situation. She is looking for the decision that will embody that ideal. Notice how specific to the minutest detail of the situation that ideal decision is. Just a little difference in the character of the girl, or of the wife, or of her husband, or of the household economy, or of the nature and intensity of the sickness would make a great difference in the ideal decision.

The ideal decision is one that should not increase the inevitable tensions, not make the problem worse or breed more new problems than necessary, but keep the problem and its tensions to a minimum. The solution should not be one that will increase

the girl's sickness or endanger her life—unless similar dangers to other members of the household were probable consequences. A very relevant datum (again not mentioned in the earlier paragraph) is that the length of a virus attack, unless there are complications, is not usually more than a week or two. There is thus a more or less predictable time limit to the extent of the situation if it is ideally handled.

The following hypotheses (Step 3) are very likely to cross the wife's mind: She might call up her husband and ask his advice or even ask him to make the decision. But such an act would only add to his troubles of the day, and besides he would want her to do what she thought she was capable of doing anyway in the situation, and that judgment lay with her.

Notice that in thinking this hypothesis through the wife actually passed in her reflections over into Steps 4 and 5 of the process of inquiry. For in practice these steps may overlap. It was as if she inferred that she could test the hypothesis in her mind. And then she did test it imaginatively. She found by so testing it that it would unnecessarily add some tensions to the situation, and so she rejected the hypothesis.

She might telegraph or telephone to the girl's parents. But that would more likely than not only complicate the situation. They could not do anything immediately anyway. They might insist on a Christian Science practitioner, and from the wife's experience this could endanger the girl's recovery. There might be a cultural obligation to let parents know when their child is ill. But this was a grown child, old enough to be working her own way through college. A stranger's obligation to this girl's parents seemed all but negligible. So this hypothesis was discarded.

She might appeal to the college authorities. This would probably amount to her insisting on the girl's going to the infirmary and thus obtaining the college authority to enforce the transfer. This would be physically the safest procedure. It would take the responsibility off the wife's shoulders, remove the girl from the household, and avoid all the consequences entailed by her stay-

ing there. But it would give a psychological shock to the girl, would undoubtedly bring the parents and the Christian Science authorities into the situation, might start a college-church issue, would surely intensify and prolong the illness, might even endanger the girl's life through consequences from aroused emotions difficult to predict.

The wife might undertake to nurse the girl herself. This would require a lot of extra work for a woman who already had as much as she could well do. It would add a lot of anxiety until the girl was definitely headed for recovery, and it might not be easy to keep the girl abed or from going out to classes before she was fully recuperated. The wife had to size up her own capacity for taking on this extra work, for making the proper diagnosis and giving the proper care, for firmness in keeping the girl within regimen, for courage in accepting the full responsibility of the girl's recovery.

On the whole, in this particular situation, the wife decided this last was the best solution. She resolved, however, never to accept another college girl in her household without a prior understanding that in case of any illness the girl would go to the infirmary.

This is the sort of thing a social situation is. We have considered it from the point of view of a highly intelligent participant upon whom the critical initial decision rested. We have assumed that her careful analysis of the situation corresponded closely with the actual facts and their interrelationships in the situation. The ideal decision, of course, is not determined by the attitude of a participant, but by the factual structure of the situation itself. But here it seems fairly clear that the participant's analysis of the situation was a correct one, and that her decision was the best act dictated by the structure of that particular situation.

Let us now examine this situation in relation to the main features of a generalized social situation outlined on page 140.

1. The *dynamic purposes demanding satisfaction* were those

of the college girl in her sickness and in her aversion to medical care, together with those of the family with which she was rooming.

2. The *cultural environment* was that of a typical American family and community.

3. The *physical environment* with major impact on the situation was that of the girl occupying a room in the family's house.

4. The *consequences implicit in the situation* have been elaborated in the preceding analysis.

5. The *boundaries of the situation* are also relatively clear as a result of the preceding analysis of the possible consequences. But this feature is so important as to require more particular examination. For these boundaries define the specific ethical criterion applicable to a situation. Accordingly we shall devote the next two sections to a generalized treatment of the boundary conditions of a social situation. Every social situation has both spatial, or, better, cultural boundaries, and temporal boundaries. We will take these up in succession.

The Cultural Boundaries of a Social Situation

The cultural boundaries of a social situation are determined by the number of persons involved in it, their cultural interrelationships, and their physical environment so far as this affects the ways in which the persons are involved. The outermost boundaries of any social situation as regards the persons involved is the culture pattern within which a situation occurs. The analysis of a culture pattern given in the chapter on Cultural Relativity thus becomes relevant here and can be taken over completely for the pragmatic ethics of the social situation. For the effective relations of persons to one another within a culture pattern are the only ones in which there is sanctioned responsibility for mutual consideration of one another's personal interests.

The in-group out-group concept becomes again relevant here, but with a difference. The out-group are not morally irrelevant

as they are for a cultural relativist. They enter into any situation in which they are effective and thus become morally relevant but not as responsible persons whose interests must be considered in reducing the tensions in the situation—at least not in just the same way as persons within an in-group must consider one another's interests. They are, in fact, to be regarded as part of the physical environment, objects to be coped with, not co-operated with.

Just as a fox raiding a farmer's hen coop is not considered within the situation he creates as a person whose purposes must be co-operatively adjusted to those of the farmer, so a shipload of marauding pirates off the coast of sixth century England would not be regarded as persons whose interests should be adjusted to those of the inhabitants of the settlements attacked. Members of a definite out-group (whether animals or men) are elements of a social situation as part of its environment, according to a pragmatic ethics, not as responsible persons or persons to whom one is responsible, but as objects in the situation to be coped with.

In a society in which the concept of the brotherhood of man had become a part of the culture pattern, however, the situation would be different. But this is a concept that men have had to cultivate, and not all societies have had it nor even possess it today. Where it does not exist, it is obviously not effective. And an ineffective cultural relation would simply not enter into the tensions of a social situation.

So, it can be definitely said that the outermost boundaries of any social situation as regards the responsible persons involved would be those of the culture pattern within which the situation arises. But these boundaries will also extend further to include the objects of the physical environment (including animals and men not held as culturally responsible) so far as these affect the tensions of the in-group and have to be coped with. If, however, the culture of a society includes the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, then (as perhaps in most modern civilized societies) any men involved in a situation, whether formally included in

one's society or not, will be included as persons to whom one is responsible for the satisfaction of their interests, and not simply as environmental objects to be coped with. For some groups cultural responsibility may indeed extend to domestic animals and some wild animals, but rarely are any of these given the same degree of consideration in a culture as are fellow men.

Most social situations, however, have much narrower cultural boundaries than those we have just been considering. The situation in our recent example did not actually extend much beyond the girl and the family with which she was living. There were other persons who could have become involved if the wife had made a different decision—the parents, the college authorities and possibly local members of the girl's church. These represent the outermost cultural boundaries of this particular situation.

Thus the cultural boundaries of a situation vary with the situation. If the problem were one of where to build a new fire house in a certain small city—whether to use a corner of a park where children play and older people relax or to condemn and purchase new land, thus taking a block of buildings off the city tax rolls—this problem would only concern that city, and, for the most part, only one section of it. But if the problem were that of putting a state super-highway through the city, the boundaries of the situation would be considerably extended though it would still be a relatively local problem. If the problem is one of labor legislation within the United States or Canada, the boundaries are vastly enlarged, though they are still confined to the sphere of a national problem. But if it is the problem of limiting the explosion of nuclear bombs, then the cultural boundaries of the problem reach the outermost limits of cultural responsibility in all modern societies which evince a respect for the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. The boundaries extend to all mankind.

The Temporal Boundaries of a Situation

The temporal boundaries of a situation are easily set provided that one can see when the tensions precipitating a problem have

been satisfied or greatly reduced. This happens whenever the right decision has been made. The situation precipitated by the college girl came to an end when her sickness was over. The wife's decision reduced a lot of the tension immediately, and the remainder resulting from inconveniences to herself and the family dissipated when the girl was fully recuperated.

Suppose, however, the wife had misjudged her husband, and, when he came home, he went into a fury and called up the college dean. Or suppose her own physical condition, due perhaps to her having only recently recovered from an illness herself, was such that, with the added work of taking care of the girl, she had a relapse. Then the increase of tensions resulting from her kindly intended decision would indicate she had made the wrong decision. She had failed to analyze the situation fully. The reality of the situation was different from her hypothesis concerning it.

And notice that the ethical criterion for the rightness or wrongness of the act is the reality of the situation, its actual structure. For the character of the husband was what it was, and if he was likely to disagree with her judgment of what to do, that was an important element in the actual situation. The right decision for her to have made under those circumstances would have been to call him up at his office, however disturbing that might have been to him, and work out with him an hypothesis as to how best to handle the situation. Similarly supposing the wife had recently been ill herself. The wife's physical condition was what it was. If she failed to take it into account, her decision was ill-considered, for she added to the tensions of the situation instead of reducing them. Her intentions were generous but badly directed, and the reality of the situation would not ethically sanction her act. And, in fact, her husband, on his return, would be equally blameworthy and wrong in his inaction if he did not appraise the situation as one too strenuous for his wife's health and insist on her finding some other way to care for the girl or, if necessary, bringing in the family doctor to use his authority.

Now when a situation worsens in some such manner, it is often rather arbitrary whether we call the worsened situation a new one precipitated by a bad decision for the original

situation, or the original situation with increased tensions calling even more urgently for a solution in terms of the reality of the situation. The choice depends largely on the degree to which the cultural boundaries are extended as a result of a decision. If many more persons are brought into a situation or many new purposes demand satisfaction as a result of a decision, the occurrence following is then generally regarded as a new situation precipitated by the consequences of an act issuing from the original one. If the persons involved are the same or mostly the same and the problematic purposes that need to be resolved are essentially the same but aggravated in some way, we usually regard the situation as the same but worsened.

Incidentally, even a right decision may precipitate a new situation. For instance, if the right decision in view of the wife's physical condition were to remove the girl to the infirmary on the doctor's authority, the wife and her family would be relieved almost entirely of further involvement with the girl's sickness, but many new persons would now be involved and a wholly new situation with its own specific tensions would emerge.

It might be asked, then, why this decision relieving the wife of all responsibility and so relieving the family of all its tensions would not have been the best one for the wife to have made anyway, even if she could physically take on the care of the girl. The answer is that it would have added greatly to the girl's misery to send her to the infirmary and would have bothered the wife's conscience, not to mention that it would cause trouble for a lot of other people who were distantly involved. The new situation would develop more tensions than the situation presented when handled as the wife did handle it, and those consequences of increased tension were within the cultural boundaries of the wife's situation so long as she was considering a decision to bring them into action. In short, a good decision may produce a new situation with more tensions than were active in the original one, but it is the best decision if it produces less added tensions than any other decision would have produced. The

problematic situation and its possible consequences for reduction or increase of tensions is always the ethical criterion. Whatever are the tensions described as within the given situation or in another which develops as a consequence of an action made, it is the structure of the given situation that determines the rightness or the wrongness of the act. The act is right if it reduces these tensions as much as possible, wrong if it increases them or fails to reduce them when another act would have done the reverse.

From these considerations one may begin to wonder if the question of the time boundary at which a situation ends is not rather artificial. Let us take the wife's situation with the imagined circumstance of her having recently been ill herself as one of the real factors to be considered. The right decision then would clearly be to remove the girl from the house and for that end probably to put the problem into the hands of the college authorities. The college authorities would then definitely be included in the cultural spread of the wife's situation. Suppose the wife acts on this judgment and calls up the college infirmary. A whole group of new persons are then brought actively into the situation, where previously, in the wife's deliberation as to what was best to do, they were only passively within the situation as persons who would be actively concerned if the wife took the action of calling them in.

Now, shall we say this is the same situation, and that the wife's calling up the infirmary was the first of a series of forthcoming acts toward the solution of the problem? Or shall we say that these are two situations, one concerning the wife's problem and her family's which she solved satisfactorily by having the girl transferred out of the house, and a second situation precipitated by the girl's being placed under the college authorities?

If the wife's act was right, as we are assuming, it does not on pragmatic grounds actually make any difference which way we take it. But notice that if the act was wrong, this consideration does make a difference. For her wrong act would have enlarged

the cultural spread of the tensions unnecessarily. This would have been the result if she, as we first assumed, had been in good health and nevertheless had called up the infirmary and asked to have the girl removed. For on this latter assumption, if the wife's analysis of the situation was correct, the college authorities were not properly to be regarded as essential factors in the most satisfactory solution of the problem. In other words, they were not essential factors in the reality of the situation. As pragmatic moralists, we should want to be able to say that the wife had acted a trifle selfishly and not according to the most satisfactory solution indicated by the actual structure of her situation, and had by her act precipitated a new and much more complex situation with considerably increased tensions.

This is actually a very good example to use, for a pragmatic moralist would not want to say that a physically healthy woman had done entirely wrong in sending the girl to the infirmary. There was an element of inconsiderateness in the attitude of the girl. Had the girl been an older woman with a wider experience of life and the give-and-take required in social relationships, the wife would have had much less patience with the woman's attitude. The wife's decision to nurse the girl was generous and the best decision indicated by the situation. The next best decision probably would have been to put the problem into the hands of the college authorities. This second decision would have been only relatively wrong in view of the reality of the situation. It is typical of pragmatic ethics to allow for degrees of rightness and wrongness in this manner. Every situation has implicit in its structure a best act—the moral ideal indicated by that situation—but there are generally a number of second best or third best acts, which are somewhat wrong in comparison with the ideal. It is to render possible a judgment of the wrongness of an act—even if it is only a little wrong—that it is important for the pragmatist to be able to point out the temporal boundaries of a situation.

Insistence on the temporal boundaries of a situation by no means carries a denial of continuity in human experience. As

long as man lives and social relationships endure, human experience continues on. One situation is followed by another and leads into another. Some are shorter and some are longer. Look back over what you did this day. It falls into a succession of incidents like the narrative of a novel. You had your breakfast, you got into your car and went to your office, you took care of a number of letters to be written, you had several conferences. The one with the life insurance agent lasted only a few minutes and you never expect to see him again. The one with your boss, however, over a question of professional policy continued an earlier discussion and will come up again with far-reaching results. The reprimand to your new stenographer for a sloppy piece of typing was short but may well lead to discharging her in a week or two. And so on.

These incidents have breaks. Some constitute a whole situation in themselves, others are parts of a continuing situation with many interruptions and intervals filled with totally unrelated incidents. Some situations complete in themselves are at the same time instrumental to the carrying on of subsequent situations. Such was your breakfast which was completed upon the satisfaction of your appetite, but was at the same time essential for your carrying on of all your morning business. And there are situations included in other situations in big systems of activity. So in the organization for the running of an office building, there are the janitors, elevator operators, mechanics, bookkeepers, all carrying on their interconnected functions with problematic situations arising at many different levels, and all ultimately under the direction of a manager. In the organization of the government of a city or a nation, the system of functions is still more complex, and consequently also the interrelation of problematic situations that develops in the operation.

However, be it the problem of how to get rid as quickly as possible of an insurance agent for whom you have no need or the determination by a State Department of a national government policy regarding the discontinuance of nuclear bomb tests, the nature and solution of the problem, according to the pragmatist,

is basically of the same sort. It consists in an inquiry into the structure of the situation, with its cultural and temporal boundaries, which contains embodied there the criterion for its own solution.

The Reality of the Situation

The ultimate ethical criterion of the pragmatist is thus the reality of the situation. The material for the definition of it has been spread out for us in the previous sections. A situation is made up of human purposive behavior, and of the persons performing it, and of the cultural pattern of these persons so far as this becomes involved, and of the physical environment, all centered in some problem or aim which determines through its consequences the boundaries of the situation in its cultural spread and temporal duration. *A social situation* may be summarily defined as *an occasion in which a number of purposes involving a number of persons are so interrelated by their causal connections as to require acts for their satisfaction as a whole.* This (or some equivalent phrasing) may be taken as the qualitative criterion in discourse for a pragmatic ethics. The quantitative criterion or ethical standard for this ethics would then be the greatest amount of satisfaction possible within the boundaries of the situation. The degree of satisfaction would be estimated in terms of the total reduction of tensions produced by the acts performed. The best act would be the one that would reduce the tensions to the maximum possible, the worst that which would increase them most, and other possible acts would be better or worse according as they fell between these two extremes.

The above definition and its standards would be the pragmatic ethical criteria *in discourse*. But the actual criterion would, of course, be the actual situation itself with its actual dynamic purposes pressing for quiescence. For this latter is what the descriptive definition refers to. This latter is the natural norm, the selective system, which by its active pressure upon the

persons involved in the situation is requiring an act of conduct or a series of acts to reduce that pressure. The sanction for the correct moral act is the total pressure of the set of interconnected purposes demanding the resultant act that will be most satisfying. If an act performed increases the tensions instead of reducing them, this increase of tensions automatically registers the wrongness of the act and induces redoubled effort on the part of those involved in the situation to correct the act with another that will be more satisfying. The reality of the situation is thus the actual operative pragmatic norm and the sanctioning agent for the rightness or wrongness of an act.

Every situation, accordingly, institutes its own moral criterion in the very reality of that situation. In this manner, pragmatic ethics breaks down the rigidity of the norms of cultural relativity. It recognizes the dynamic pressures of a cultural pattern and draws them into any social situation that embodies them, but equally it recognizes the dynamic pressures of a cultural lag and shows how wrong an act is that resists these demands and yields less than the fullest satisfaction available from the situation. Pragmatism then encourages constant reform, readjustment, and redirection as the configuration of human dynamics changes from year to year and from generation to generation.

The pragmatic criterion of the reality of the situation likewise avoids the difficulties of hedonism while recognizing the basic hedonic appeal. For pragmatic ethics is also a satisfaction theory. It seeks to maximize satisfaction and takes over a large part of the hedonic lore regarding the ways of estimating greater or lesser degrees of satisfaction. But it avoids the tendency of hedonism to think of satisfactions in terms of units or droplets of pleasure and pain and of a calculus of satisfactions as if they could be arithmetically added and subtracted like so many beans or grains of sand. The potential satisfaction inherent in the reality of a situation is for the pragmatist the resultant interaction of many purposes in a total complex and is to be thought of not so much in terms of an addition of units as

in terms of an integration or equilibrium of competing factors. The reason the pragmatist can think of satisfaction in this manner, and the hedonist so only with difficulty, is that the pragmatist can appeal to the limiting boundaries of a social situation. As we have noticed, one of the great difficulties with the hedonic ethics is its inability consistently to restrict the ethical horizon within practicable limits. The social hedonistic ideal of the greatest happiness of the greatest number has no boundaries, and cannot stop even with the vertebrates as the evidence keeps coming in that learning and purposive behavior and presumably accompanying feelings of pleasure and pain extend down beyond the level of the vertebrates. The pragmatic moralist is not bothered by this theoretical dilemma, which seems to him ridiculously unrealistic. His ethical judgment consistently with his theory and his observations stops at the boundaries of the social situation. He maximizes satisfactions within the problematic situation, observing its limits as the practical boundaries of the purposive pressures demanding resolution.

Limiting the practical range of ethical judgment to the situation to which the judgment applies has another implication rarely considered by other ethical theories. This is that a past situation, however badly handled, is really past and gone. There is no use moping about it or even indulging regrets about it except as they may teach you to have better judgment another time. If a driver has sized up a situation badly and turned over his car on a curve, that situation, badly as it was handled, is past and gone and irremediable. A new situation has been precipitated calling for instant action. Get the passengers out of the car, see that other cars on the road are not endangered. And this applies to everybody in the car. Life presses forward, and regrets and recriminations and resentment over past occurrences can have no ethical value unless they influence the present situation for the better. Along the same lines, it follows that the only justification for punishment is either the improvement of the accused or his removal from society as a source of serious

danger. On pragmatic grounds there would never be ethical justification for an act of sheer retaliation.

All of this sounds so lowly, practical, common, and earthy that some people wonder if it is ethics at all. It all seems on the level of barber-shop advice or a mother's final words to her daughter going to her first dance or the rough-and-tumble experiences of a young man just out of college breaking into the business world to make his own living. Any little problem becomes an ethical problem—getting a haircut, joining a club, giving technical advice as an engineer, looking after one's health, even brushing one's teeth—all are situations with social implications, and all are thrown in one big common hopper along with those grave traditional moral questions of a doctor's duty toward a patient, a captain's duty to stay with his sinking ship till the last soul is off, a soldier's duty to charge in the face of enemy fire, a nurse's duty in caring for the injured after a disaster. All moral problems are leveled down to any everyday situation in which a person happens to be. There are no moral codes sanctified by tradition or divine revelation. No high moral principles to which one holds though the heavens fall. No natural inalienable rights. Not even a universal moral law to which every man consciously or unconsciously subscribes. Just situations that follow one another or overlap or include one another in the complex on-going movement of life, some with wider and some with narrower boundaries.

The pragmatist takes such criticism as the greatest compliment. For he prides himself on having brought ethics down out of the clouds, debunked it of all high-flown empty concepts which led as often as not to blind immorality rather than to morally justifiable action. He believes that by his method of ethical analysis and cognitive inquiry he has shown men how they can guide their actions intelligently toward right conduct by an awareness of the reality of the situation. And, of course, since every moment in a man's life is a moment in some human situation, every moment, however insignificant, becomes an item of moral value.

One more point. So far we have continually referred to problematic situations to illustrate the pragmatic ethics. The impression could arise that only such situations contain moral value—and Dewey himself gives that impression. True, a moral problem inevitably arises in a problematic situation. But purely delightful social situations do occur containing no problems, or so few as to be negligible. In co-operative consummations of mutual satisfactions we find positive ethical value of a high order.

Such situations are courtship, and picnics, and parties, and games in which clean sportsmanship rises above mere desire to win, concerts, and dramatic performances. A group of people gather together for the joy of the occasion. The tensions are all in the consummatory field. The fun lasts as long as satiation does not set in. There are better and worse parties and concerts depending on the people or the way the party goes or the program is planned.

No two such consummatory situations are just alike. Looking back at a party one has given, one can often see how it might have been improved. And there can be justifiable criticism of a symphony program in view of its audience. But there is no urgent problem to be solved in a situation of that kind. And if all those present did have a good time, they go their various ways home, and the situation comes to an end, no problem having arisen and the value of the situation at a high level. For pleasurable anticipations were aroused, and consummatory tensions stimulated, and these tensions all released in satisfactions. According to the pragmatic theory, the situation attained high moral value in terms of its own pattern of tensions acting as the criterion of its own success—and there was no problem. This was the actual reality of that situation.

A Difficulty

A difficulty that many critics find with pragmatic ethics has to do with its form of relativity. To be sure, it is not so extreme

as cultural relativism. For the reality of a situation would always justify reform whenever the institutions of a society are out of adjustment with the conditions under which they are operating. The ethics of the social situation is a continuous reform program. It encourages constant scrutiny of social laws and customs to keep them instrumental to a society's potential satisfactions and not frustrating of them.

But pragmatic ethics has its own relativism in holding moral judgments to the criterion of the social situation. In this theory there is no actually recognized criterion of conduct beyond that of reducing to the maximum the set of tensions within the situation. Pragmatism regards more extended criteria as fictitious abstractions or arbitrary expressions of group bias. Thus the setting up of a cultural pattern as an ultimate moral criterion is nothing more than the expression of the group bias on the part of the conservatives and reactionaries in a society. And the making of universal pleasure the ultimate moral criterion is abstracting one important element in a moral situation and setting it up as the sole criterion to the neglect of all the other elements and relations inherent in a social context. Through his method of inquiry incorporated into the very act of moral judgment, the pragmatist believes that he has founded his ethics firmly on the scientific facts and that the only justifiable criterion resulting from such inquiry is the reality of the situation. If then it appears that every situation is unique, so that every situation precisely considered develops its own moral standard, that is the fact of the matter. What is the right act to perform is determined in reference to the pattern of tensions inherent in each situation. Moral criteria and moral judgments are relative to the situation. What is right in one situation may be wrong in another. Pragmatism expresses a doctrine of situational relativity.

But why should that be any objection? Unless one is assuming that ethics must offer universal, necessary judgments that are absolute in some such sense, it is as likely as not that the evidence would indicate ethical judgments to be at least in some

degree relative. At least they are relative to mankind and do not embrace insects and amoebae.

The pragmatist submits that the relativism he advocates is merely that of the reality of things as they are, the way conduct actually is determined and judged, so far as the evidence shows through inquiry. Moreover, he points out that the boundaries of his situations are flexible. They extend as far as any relevant consequences can be shown to have effects on the tensions involved.

But it is just at this point that the critics find a difficulty. If the boundaries are made too flexible, they disappear in a continuity of cause-and-effect occurrences within which no moral criterion will be found. The strength of pragmatism lies in the fact that the boundaries of most practical situations can be pretty firmly established. But sometimes this is not so easily done, or rather sometimes there are occurrences resulting from an early decision which reduced the tension of a situation but ultimately led to consequences of greatly aggravated tension.

A classic instance of this sort of decision was the act of appeasement of Hitler by Chamberlain at Munich in 1938, which had the effect of encouraging Hitler in his aggressive expansion program and culminated in World War II.

There is, of course, no situation that does not, upon resolution, set the scene in some part for a succeeding situation. The pragmatic advice is to reduce the tensions in each situation as it comes and then meet the next situation similarly. Don't seek perfection or some unattainable ideal. This ideal may lead you to take your eyes off the reality of the situation you are in and to do something foolish and inappropriate. Do the best you can with each situation as it comes along. Try always to make conditions better than you found them. Seek always from situation to situation to make things better. This is the policy known as *meliorism,* which is Latin for "betterism."

This is very good advice for the great majority of human situations, but it can lead to disaster under certain conditions—

and the historical conditions behind Chamberlain's decisions of appeasement were of just that kind. As situations arose for English policy decisions up to, and for a while even after, the fatal act of appeasement at Munich, the English continually acted to ease the tensions at each successive occasion. But in this instance each release of tensions edged Britain nearer and nearer the precipice of a second World War.

This is the sort of condition in human affairs that pragmatic ethics seems unable to cope with. Practically everyone now agrees that Chamberlain's act of appeasement at Munich was a wrong act. But, on pragmatic principles, how can it be judged so? Wasn't that (as well as previous acts that led up to it) just the act which the reality of the situation indicated for Chamberlain?

One way out is to say that, according to the reality of this situation, Chamberlain was wrong but that in terms of all the data available to him for his inquiry he was right. This is the ethical difference between objective and subjective rightness of action—a well-recognized and justifiable distinction. But in this instance does it get the pragmatist out of his trouble?

It is necessary in the ethics of the social situation that the boundaries of a situation be determinate. The only feasible way to determine the temporal boundaries is in terms of the reduction of the tensions that produced the situation. Generally this procedure is adequate. It does mark the solution of a practical problem as it presents itself in its human relations. Rarely in a complex problematic situation are all the tensions completely satisfied. Some hold over and start up new problems that have to be solved in their own terms. So, whenever a decision greatly relieves the tensions of a situation, this must on pragmatic principles be accepted as the objectively right decision. Pragmatic ethics has no other criterion for right action. If, in fact, the tensions are greatly reduced, then for this situation this is the right action. New tensions may develop later out of some of the consequences of this decision, but these constitute a new problematic situation to be met and solved in its own terms.

Now, historically, Chamberlain's decision to yield to Hitler at Munich did greatly reduce the international tensions of that particular situation. The fact that everyone was not satisfied is not surprising in so complex a situation. No matter what his decision had been, some tensions would have been left over. For the time, Chamberlain's decision did clear the atmosphere. It would be very difficult (and probably impossible) to demonstrate consistently with pragmatic ethical principles that Chamberlain had not made the right pragmatic decision in terms of the situation in which he was placed. Though a much worse situation developed after some months, which can be traced back to Chamberlain's fateful decision at Munich, on pragmatic principles this was a new situation developing from a new set of international tensions and one to be handled as a new unique situation in its own terms.

Now it is unquestionably true that a concatenation of situations, each solved in its own terms but each worse than the preceding and the whole series headed for disaster, is relatively rare in human experience. Still it occurs often enough, and when it does occur is serious enough to constitute a grave inadequacy in an ethical theory that cannot cope with it. It is because of this particular area of inadequacy that its critics have often called pragmatism an ethics of appeasement.

So far as a critic can see, there is only one way of overcoming this deficiency in a pragmatic ethics. That is to find some long-range, far-sighted criterion for human conduct that would extend beyond the range of any particular situation. But if a pragmatist accepted such a principle, he would have to give up his claim that an ethics of the social situation was a fully adequate theory. And the facts of human conduct do seem to require him to give up this claim.

However, as earlier stated, the ethics of the social situation appears adequate for a very large proportion of the problems of conduct the ordinary man has to face in the course of his life. Most of man's practical problems can be solved within the boundaries of a specific situation, and are most satisfactorily

worked out by the pragmatic method of inquiry with the aim of reducing the tensions as completely as possible.

But since for a certain group of man's most serious problems, the pragmatic criterion appears unable to offer direction, and may even give misdirection, we are led to look into the working of other ethical criteria.

CHAPTER 8

THE SELF-REALIZATION THEORY

Human Traits and Dispositions

THE ETHICAL THEORIES we have been dealing with in the previous chapters set up ethical criteria focusing primarily on acts. They ask how we may determine what is a good or right act. Cultural relativism says it is an act in conformity with the established institutions of a society. Individual and social hedonism say it is an act that maximizes satisfactions. The social situation theory says it is an act which minimizes the tensions that arise in a situation. None of these theories gives primary attention to the person performing these acts as a character or personality.

The self-realization theory changes this focus. It concentrates its attention primarily on the goodness of the person. It maintains that if the person is good, he may be relied upon to perform good acts. So, it asks first what constitutes a good personality. The ethical criteria for a good personality, it holds, will then as a consequence be found to apply to the acts such a person performs. In fact, on this theory, the criteria for a good person carry over into men's social relations. These criteria also tell us what constitutes a good society.

The key word for this ethical theory is *integration*. A good

personality is an integrated one, and similarly a good society is a well-integrated one, and acts are good in so far as they promote integration in persons and their societies. But what is integration in a man or his society? This is the question a self-realizationist undertakes to answer with as much precision as the evidence available will permit.

The usual way of approaching the theory is from integration in the individual to its projection into a society. It does not ultimately make much difference whether you start with integration in the person or in the society. But perhaps the theory is clearer if we start with the individual, and so I will follow the usual sequence.

What constitutes an integrated personality? For an answer to this question we are led to ask another: What is it that is subject to integration in a personality? What sort of things are there in a person that can be integrated? The answer is a person's dispositions. This is a broad term that includes a man's capacities for satisfaction, his instinctive and acquired drives, his anticipations and apprehensions, his habits of achievement in carrying out appetitions and aversions—in short, all his dynamic purposive capacities. The term also includes a man's physical and physiological capacities and his co-ordination and learning capacities. But these latter will not concern us much except as they underlie his purposive capacities. The purposive capacities are the ones that make up the central objects of a self-realizationist's description of personality integration.

Notice, in this enumeration the stress is laid not on a person's acts but his capacities. For dispositions are capacities. So now we must describe a personality disposition. The subject of *disposition* is not entirely new to us. We have already encountered this concept in dealing with cultural institutions and patterns. These also were dispositions. They were social dispositions. Using the same mode of approach we used in Chapter III, we now ask what specifically are personality dispositions.

In that earlier analysis we saw that the identification of a disposition requires a description of its *seat* and of its *character*.

The seat of a disposition is the configuration of traits that establishes its existence in a certain place and its continuance for a certain length of time. The character of a disposition is the group of traits describing what the disposition does when it goes into action. When the seat of a disposition is brought into an appropriate situation inducing action, the character of the disposition is exhibited. Thus a thirsty man has a disposition to drink. The seat of the disposition is in the man's body, specifically in the dehydrated condition of his throat and the readiness and tensions of his muscles for the act of drinking. The character of this disposition exhibits itself when the man comes in contact with water and proceeds to drink. We can go further than that and say that a man has a disposition to become thirsty whenever his body becomes dehydrated. Here the seat of the disposition is that part of the body susceptible to dehydration, and the character of the disposition is the tension of the muscles in the throat constituting a readiness to drink together with the characteristic feeling of thirst that accompanies these tensions. So, we speak not only of thirst as a disposition to drink, but also of an instinct of thirst which is the inborn disposition of a man to become thirsty under specified conditions. All the instincts, drives, and habits of man that we have referred to earlier in other contexts are, we now see, human dispositions.

Some writers have tried to break dispositions down into disconnected events occurring in a series. But this attempt to reduce a disposition to the succession of occurrences in which a disposition manifests itself will not do. It describes only a succession of events but not a disposition. It fails to describe the verifiable reliability of a disposition by which the character of a disposition can be predicted. Self-realizationists therefore stress the ground for the connectivity of occurrences that arise when a disposition goes into action. The character of a disposition is factually tied to the seat of a disposition. The seat includes a readiness to produce the character of the disposition whenever the appropriate conditions arise, and when these conditions arise the character of the disposition is *realized* in an occurrence.

This is the most primitive sort of example for understanding what is meant by *realization*. When a character, which the seat of a disposition is prepared to produce, actually is produced under suitable conditions, then it is said that the character of the disposition is realized. The character which previously lay in the seat as a capacity is now made real in an actual occurrence. The specific character of the capacity to drink which lay in the tensions of the thirsty man's throat becomes realized in that actual occurrence of the man's drinking as soon as his lips have contact with the water.

The self-realization theory finds its most primitive sense of good in the realization of such human capacities. But since man has a multitude of such dispositions, it becomes necessary to organize them so as to obtain the most nearly complete realization of a man's capacities. The attainment of such an organization is the integration of his personality. Thus the key term for the basic ethical criterion for the self-realization theory is *integration*.

But that which is integrated is human dispositions with a view to the fullest possible realization of their characters. And if all of a man's dispositions are gathered up under a single term and are said to be the man's character (as is customary in common speech), the ethical ideal of the self-realization theory is that a man should to the fullest degree realize his character.

It is dispositions, then, that are integrated in a human personality. And we have seen that every disposition has a seat and a character, and that the seat establishes the location and continuance of a disposition, but that it is the character of the disposition that comes to be realized.

In the illustration of the thirsty man, we pointed out that the seat of his disposition was a condition of his physical body. Now, it is important to generalize this observation. The human body in its anatomical and physiological constitution is the seat of all human dispositions. It is acknowledged by almost all psychologists today that there are no mental dispositions that are not embedded in the physiological conditions of the human body. The generalization extends still further to the hypothesis

that there are no mental states that are not directly correlated with physiological activities. The evidences for this correlation are very strong. They include all the evidences for the dependence of a personality upon neural and glandular functioning, not to mention the changes produced by drugs, temperature, humidity and the like. Not all self-realizationists, it must be admitted, would have accepted this thorough-going correlation. But without it the description of a disposition becomes vague, if not unverifiable. The theory seems to me at its strongest in accepting the correlation and affirming that the seat of all dispositions is some constituent of the physical body. The seat is then firmly established and clearly designated in principle even though often our physiological knowledge is inadequate to state just what the physiological pattern is that constitutes the seat of a specific human disposition. But, as before noted, the evidence justifying this designation of the seat of a human disposition is very great and steadily mounting.

From this hypothesis that the seat of a human disposition is some constituent of a man's physical body, it follows that the seat of a man's whole character, or his personality structure, lies in his body. His personality (at least as we know it) has its place in his body and endures as long as his body lives. His character is realized, however, wherever his dispositions go into action.

Having thus found that a man's personality is his organization of dispositions, we must now ask more searchingly just how these dispositions come to be organized. This is the problem of personality structure or human nature. We turn to this in the next two sections.

Integration of Dispositions

The many dispositions a man has—his drives, habits, aims, and ideals—fall into groups which are common to all men. These big groupings make up what is usually meant by human nature. The particular way in which these large groups of dispositions develop in any particular man make up his personal character.

The term now current for these groupings of human dispositions is *personality structure.*

There is an analogy, which can be illuminating, between a man's physical structure and his personality structure. It is indeed something more than an analogy because presumably a man's personality structure rests upon his physical structure. Both of them are structures that develop by a process of growth and after a certain time reach a stage of maturity. The analogy is closer if we begin considering man's physical structure from an early stage of the embyro. If we begin early enough there is very little differentiation of parts and functions. But the cell structures are such that presently they differentiate into bone structures, muscles, circulatory system, nervous system, and so forth. When the child is born, these are all quite well developed and are functioning efficiently and harmoniously in relation to one another. Their mutual co-ordination is so smooth and remarkable that we speak of the child as an *organism.* The distinguishing feature of an organism is that each part is so related to the others that its functioning furthers their functioning and their functioning furthers its functioning. Each part serves as an instrument for the proper functioning of every other part, and so also each part is an end whose proper functioning every other part serves. Such a whole of mutually co-ordinated parts, where every part serves both as means and end for every other part, is known as an *organic whole.* The human physical organism is a fine example of an organic whole. As long as this mutual co-ordinated functioning goes on, we speak of the organism as being *healthy.* When anything goes wrong with any one of the parts, it affects all the other parts. The whole organism is affected and its functioning impeded, and we say it is unhealthy. So, a characteristic feature of an organic whole is that a defective functioning of any one part disturbs the functioning of every other part. As we shall see, a healthy personality structure is also an organic whole.

But there is another important point of analogy. This is that the physical structure of all human organisms is so closely

similar from man to man that charts can be made describing the human skeleton, the muscle system and the way it is attached to the skeleton, the circulatory system, the endocrine system, and the nervous system. These big structural groups of functions are so constant from man to man that surgeons can predict with great accuracy just where a certain organ is situated, and how it is related to neighboring organs, so that in performing an operation they can tell just how to reach the diseased part with the least disturbance to the continued functioning of the total organism.

Yet with this large amount of similarity as between man and man, every individual human organism is different from every other. Part of this difference, as we know, comes from heredity, but a considerable part comes from the way the body has been used in dealing with its environment. Certain muscles are developed more than others, depending on how they are used. The very features of the face reflect an organism's speech habits. The total structure is affected by the kind and amount of nourishment a child has.

Personality structure is like physical structure. There are big structural elements of the personality that are alike in all men. Yet no two men have exactly the same personality, and these differences are due partly to heredity and partly to the way the person has lived and has met the many situations in which he has become involved.

The self-realizationist takes as his central point of departure the large amount of cumulative evidence that the human personality is in its effective functioning an organic whole. A good personality is a healthy one, and that means an integrated one, and that means one in which all the personality functions are mutually co-ordinated as an organic whole.

The idea lying behind this conclusion is the easily accepted one that it is good when a desire is realized in an achievement. Stated in terms of dispositions, this means that a good disposition is one that can realize its character. It follows that a good set of dispositions is a set that is well co-ordinated for the maxi-

mum realization of the total set. Such a set will be an integrated one, an organic whole. Failure to integrate a group of dispositions leads inevitably to frustration. So the dynamic agency for an integrated personality is the elimination of frustrating dispositions.

This stress upon the dynamic tendency of personality structure toward integration and the elimination of persistently frustrating dispositions is something only the self-realizationist among the traditional moralists makes. The hedonists give full recognition to the value of success in any act of achievement, but not to a personality structure with a system of integrated dispositions which consistently tends to realize a person's aims and ideals throughout a lifetime. Moreover, this dynamic tendency toward an integrated personality is not to be confused with the drive of a purposive act for a specific goal. It is not strictly speaking a purposive act. It is the selective activity of dispositions for purposive acts. It selects against persistently frustrating dispositions and in favor of dispositions that operate harmoniously with one another.

Take a simple instance. If a man has developed a habit of continuous and excessive smoking, he will presently find that this disposition interferes with his business life, his home life, and even his recreation. His health is affected, he develops a cigarette cough, his wind is short. A pressure is developed from all these other dispositions to eliminate this obstructive habit. This is the integrative tendency of the personality. This pressure of the relatively integrated dispositions to shove an obstructive disposition out is not set up by any specific desire or purpose. It is not like deciding not to swim because the water is cold. It is something much deeper and more all-embracing than that. It is the total pressure of the relatively integrated dispositions of a man's personality to maintain this integration and eliminate dispositions that conflict with a man's harmonious and efficient functioning.

Once one has fully grasped this concept of the dynamic integrative tendency of the personality, one can see why the self-

realizationist regards this as the central ethical concept rather than the hedonist's satisfaction of a drive or the pragmatist's reduction of tensions in a situation. The concept of integration, he maintains, embraces these and more too.

We can now give the self-realizationist's definition of a good person. *A good person is one whose dispositions are interrelated according to the principle of the organic whole.* This is the qualitative ethical criterion for the goodness of a person. A person whose dispositions are so related is said to have an integrated personality. Accordingly, the more integrated a person, the better.

There are two standards of integration. The one extensive and the other intensive. The greater the number of dispositions integrated—or as we ordinarily say, the greater the complexity or richness of a personality—the greater his moral worth. And, secondly, the greater the degree to which his dispositions mutually co-operate with one another, the greater his worth.

Psychologically such a personality is a healthy one. Hence a self-realizationist is quite willing to equate a morally good person with a mentally healthy one. An unhealthy personality is a disintegrated one and, in that sense, bad. In excess such a personality is considered neurotic and, in the extreme, insane. If a man's personality simply lacks breadth though is otherwise seemingly integrated, he may not be regarded as mentally ill but merely limited or shallow in character. However, for reasons that will come out clearly later, a man of shallow character is likely to be so as a result of some blockage upon his full capacities of human development. The blockage may be of a mildly neurotic type. If so, his shallowness is unhealthy. Or it may be the result of the limitations of his social environment. If this is the reason, he is simply undeveloped, which is also not exactly a healthy condition. But whatever name we give to these various types and degrees of incomplete personality integration, they are all deficiencies of goodness grading into stages of badness in a personality.

The foregoing definition of a good personality, with the quan-

titative standards derived from it, should not be regarded as the self-realizationist's final criteria of ethical value. For the self-realization theory extends the concept of integration into man's social relationships and takes full account of these also. We shall come to this extension later. But first we must see in more detail what are the main structural lines of integration in a human personality and how these are developed.

The Structure and Growth of a Personality

There are many theories of the structure of a personality—or what corresponds in the personality (on the analogy given earlier) to the anatomical structure of the physical body. The details of integration are left vague unless we know something about this structure.

The most influential traditional theory of personality structure comes from Plato and has entered deeply into common-sense thinking. Most authorities today regard it as inadequate in view of a lot of evidence that has been uncovered since Plato's time. His is the theory that the mind operates through three main faculties—reason, will, and appetite. Reason is the faculty of judgment, will the executive faculty with power to carry through the decisions of reason, and appetite the mass of impulses, emotions, and passions that seek satisfaction. According to Plato, an integrated personality is one in which reason controls the will, and reason and will together control the passions.

Introspectively we find a good deal of evidence to support this view. When temptations arising out of our passionate nature demand satisfaction with great urgency and without thought of the consequences, reason comes in and by reflection and judgment shows what are to be the consequences, and then reason enlists the will to hold the passions in restraint and resist the temptations of the impulses.

In this view, reason and will are dynamic powers set over against the dynamic powers of the appetites. In this way the appetites come to be regarded as an evil group always trying

to break through the steady balanced judgment of reason and in revolt against the policing authority of the will. A disintegrated personality is one in which the passions get the upper hand and overpower reason and its executive agent, will.

The difficulty with the view is that in closer study of human actions, which has been carried far in recent psychological and psychiatric investigations, there is little or no evidence for the faculties of reason and will as Plato and his followers describe them. The whole of human dynamics comes from the appetites or drives and certain organizations of these. And it is these drives that hold each other in restraint against precipitant actions rather than a separate faculty of will. Reason in human action comes in through the process of learning affecting the dynamics of the impulses. It makes judgments as to the means by which the impulse for a purposive act may reach its goal, or as to the most feasible way a group of conflicting purposes in a problematic situation can attain their maximum satisfactions. Reason is in the service of human purposive impulses rather than the reverse as Plato held. However, Plato was correct in the idea that reason is the great integrative agency of the human personality. But this integration is not brought about by a separate power of reason imposed upon the purposive impulses with the help of another separate power of will. Reason acts as a mediator among blocked and conflicting purposes to organize ways of acting that will give as much satisfaction as possible to the various conflicting purposes. It offers what foresight it can, as a result of past experience and learning, in judgments of the consequences of acts a man is impelled by an urgent drive to perform. What these judgments do is to arouse impulses of fear and apprehension which, if strong enough, block off the contemplated impulsive act. The conflict which Plato thought was between will and impulse is a conflict between a present impulse and present fears of certain consequences which reflection upon past experience brings up to resist the urgent impulse. In another sense than Plato's, it is indeed reason that holds an urgent temptation in check. But it is not reason as a power from above, but

reason as the recall of past experience and learning arousing impulses of fear for the consequences. It is indeed an integrative activity, but one that works among the impulses, not over them.

Personality structure, then, in other views than Plato's faculty hypothesis, builds up from a foundation of human drives and purposes. There is fairly widespread agreement among the recent authorities that the following big structural groupings can be made: (1) purposive structures and habits, (2) roles, and (3) conscience and the ego ideal.

Purposive Structures and Roles

A well-learned purposive act is already an achievement in integration. When we were describing in Chapter 2 the structure of a purposive act for a typical appetition, we were describing the integration of a number of subordinate acts organized under the correction of the main drive and its goal. This made up a system of acts, which in the achievement of its goal is a model instance of a harmonious organization of acts with an integrative structure. The self-realizationist maintains that it is this integrated organization of purposive activity that gives value to the total structure and to all the separate activities going on within the structure. An error in an instrumental act is a break in the structure. It is a disorganizing act in the structure. A correct act is one that integrates with the total structure. The same comments can be made about the structure of an aversion. Any act of successful achievement is an integrated performance.

The self-realizationist would wish one to notice, too, that the integrative process is a dynamic one. In the ethical field of human conduct, we are dealing not with static organic wholes but with dynamic ones. We are dealing with organic wholes in the process of realization, or capable of such dynamic realizations. A purposive act realizes itself in the integrated achievement of its goal.

Such a well-learned act, when often repeated, we call a skill. So, a man acquires a skill in running his car. If he runs many

different kinds of cars, there is an expansion of his skill as a driver. He develops a system of specific skills adapted to the various types of cars he runs, and part of this larger integrated system of skills is his discrimination of the type of car he steps into and the particular skill appropriate to running it.

Such a system of skills comes close to being regarded as a role. Add to the system of skills that make a good driver those of knowing how to put a car together and to take it apart and to make repairs in it, then you have a mechanic. Here we come upon an unmistakable role, for this may be the man's occupation.

The line between a skill and a role is very shadowy. We speak of a skill if we are thinking mainly in terms of a well-learned purposive structure. We speak of a role if we are thinking of a diversity of purposive structures and demands which are required of a man in carrying on his life. Just as a purposive structure is an organization of acts or of dispositions to act, so a role is an organization of purposive structures. It is a cluster of purposive dispositions to act in certain ways under certain conditions.

There is the role of a father or a mother, the role of a lawyer or a doctor or a teacher or a carpenter or a mechanic, the role of a club member or the member of a church, the role of a citizen or a mayor or a senator, the role of a subordinate in a social organization, and the role of a superior. There is also the role for a woman different from that for a man, and the role for a child, a youth, a person of maturity, and an aged person.

These roles are determined largely by the institutions of a cultural pattern. We have already encountered them in our study of cultural relativism. A social institution distributes roles among the members of an institution. They are the demands made upon the members for the functioning of the institution. Thus a university distributes a large number of roles among its many members. Each teacher has his special role to perform in teaching his particular classes. He is also a member of a department and is subordinate to its head, but he has a role of authority over his students. He is a member of one or more academic committees and a member of its faculty as a governing body. He is a

member of one or more scholarly societies and probably also of the American Association of University Professors, which is concerned with the scholarly standing and academic freedom of the profession. All of these roles in one way or another are imposed upon him as a professor by his university as a social institution.

We say these roles are imposed by the institution, and the self-realizationist would agree but not in the manner of a cultural relativist, who views a social institution as a fixed and final ethical criterion. The self-realizationist thinks of the ethical authority of a social institution as lying solely in its extensive integrative structure. In so far as it integrates the roles of a large number of persons into a harmonious smoothly functioning whole, it has a greater moral authority than any single individual within the organization. We shall return to this point a little later when we follow the integrative process out beyond the individual into his society.

At this juncture, what we should notice is the way the self-realizationist takes over the anthropological and sociological evidence for the embodiment of institutional roles in the dispositional structure of individual persons. For when a person has mastered a role, this becomes embedded in his personality. The way a person acts in a given situation is then the way the role guides him to act. His disposition to carry out his role now becomes a trait in his character. We say of a professor, for instance, that he is firm in maintaining discipline in his classes, stimulating in his method of teaching, co-operative in his departmental relations, efficient in carrying out departmental assignments. All of these are character traits of the person, and they are all ways of carrying out his roles within a college institution. These roles as dispositions realized in his actions are embodied within his personality structure. They are a part of him as an individual person.

A role is more than a personality trait, however. It is an ethical norm of conduct within the situation which calls it into action. The description of the roles of a professor is a description

in detail of what a professor *ought* to be and do. Much of the sanction for this obligation descends from the social institution. But when a role gets embodied in a man's personality, it makes its demands felt upon the man directly from within. A failure to fulfill a role, to come up to the demands which a man in this role feels he should fulfill, comes to him as an intimate personal failure. A man in his own person thus approves and disapproves of his own performance and is stimulated to correct and improve it. When roles begin to act this way within a man's personality, this man has developed a *conscience* in the fullest sense of this term.

Conscience and the Ego Ideal

In dealing with conscience (as earlier noted) a distinction must be made between the irrational rigid or authoritarian conscience and the rational or humane conscience. It is only the latter in which the self-realizationist is positively interested. The former, nevertheless, is the meaning of conscience most people first think of. It is the sense of conscience associated with strong guilt feelings. For the self-realizationist, however, the feeling of guilt is not necessarily a sign of wrongdoing. It is rather a sign of what a child has been brought up to consider wrong. It is the evidence of his acculturation. And if the child's bringing up involves a cultural lag, the intense guilt feelings will only serve to preserve the cultural lag still longer and intensify the element of social disintegration it produces.

The ethically good conscience is one that supports acts conducive to an integrated personality and a co-operative society. If feelings of guilt support roles which further such integration, these feelings are all to the good. But if they do not, they can be a disintegrative element in the personality—and possibly a serious one.

There is considerable evidence that the rigid authoritarian conscience has its roots in what is known to psychiatrists as the

repressed area. We shall not need to go into the mechanism of repression here. Suffice it to say that a repression is a purposive structure part of whose motivation is beyond the reach of voluntary control. The result is that a man acting on a repressed purpose does not fully know what is motivating his act. There is, consequently, always a chance that actions from repressed motives are not harmonious with what one voluntarily in his conscious motivation wants to do. The repressed area in a personality is thus a more or less unintegrated portion of a personality and may lead to serious disintegration. It is probably the source of all neurotic and psychotic states. For most people of essentially stable character, however, the repressions cause no noticeable trouble. For a man can successfully integrate many acts with partially repressed motives into his main voluntary system of acts, provided they are not seriously disruptive.

By voluntary acts, of course, I mean here acts that are docile, acts that are open to correction when they prove in error. The great trouble with repressed motives is that acts so motivated are not open to correction. That is to say, they are rigid and not susceptible to intelligent integration; in a word, they are irrational. So far as a guilty conscience has its roots in repressions, it is accordingly rigid, incapable of intelligent integration, and so irrational.

For these reasons, in the pursuit of the highest degree of integration possible for the personality, the self-realizationist would seek to reduce the irrational authoritarian conscience to a minimum and to encourage to the limit the cultivation of the humane voluntary conscience. For the latter being free from repressions is constantly open to rational control and intelligent modification. It is a docile conscience, one that can learn from frustrating consequences. The humane conscience consists mainly of the roles that have become incorporated into the personality. These, as we have seen, make their demands upon a person, and a person feels badly, as from any failure, if he does not come up to the standards of a role he has accepted. In

fact, for most of us, a failure means precisely not fulfilling a role which we have accepted and which may have become a deeply embedded disposition of our character.

This fact leads to the important concept of *ego ideal.* This is a relatively recent concept and may be said to constitute in a well-integrated personality just what is meant by a rational humane conscience. It is the ideal a man sets up for himself as a person in his community. For every person it is somewhat different, since it consists in the roles a person has taken up into his personality. In so far as a person has really accepted these roles, and does not consider them as merely impositions placed upon him by external authorities and institutions, these roles become his own personal desires to have fulfilled. So, a teacher will deeply desire to be successful in stimulating his students and to be genuinely expert in his subject. He will be personally hurt if he does not come up to his ideal. It will be a personal hurt that has very little to do with his salary. Not only do so-called cultivated men have these ego ideals. A prize fighter may also be disheartened because he feels he has not done justice to himself in a fight he has lost. But an ego ideal is more than a man's inner desire to fulfill a single role. It is his inner desire to fulfill the whole system of roles with which he meets the life of his community. It is his ideal of what he wants to be as a total person.

An ego ideal can be something less than it might be. But a completely integrated ego ideal is the concrete ethical ideal for each individual person. It is that organization of his dispositions toward his environment which gives him the fullest potentiality of self-satisfaction in the fulfillment of his aims. Since these dispositions are his own and are incorporated in his personal self, such an integration guarantees the realization of this self as he lives them out. Thus he realizes himself—makes real what his system of dispositions potentially wants for its satisfaction. But a man cannot realize himself unless the organization of his dispositions approaches this degree of integration, and it helps if he can hold up before himself such a perfect integration as his

rational conscience and ego ideal. It helps if he can make this his deliberate purposive goal for living with his fellow men.

We can now, in modern terms, describe fairly well what an integrated personality would be. It is one in which the following levels of integration are built up:

1. Purposive structures are integrated through the learning process in the attainment of the goals of their drives.

2. These purposive structures are themselves integrated into roles derived from institutions in a person's social environment and suited to the person's aptitudes.

3. These roles are finally integrated into the total system of a person's dispositions regulated by an ego ideal concerned to make the most satisfactory adjustment to the person's social and physical environment—concerned, that is, to attain the fullest integration with that environment. Thus a person comes to make the most of his capacities, to bring these capacities into actual successful attainment, to bring them into realization, by seeing that they are integrated among themselves within his personality and also that they are integrated with his social environment.

This last phrase brings in an element that is novel and perhaps a little surprising. It is that an integrated personality needs to be integrated with his social environment. A little reflection shows that the self-realization of an integrated personality can only be attained in a social environment that is harmonious with the integrated self, and such an environment for the fullest organicity can only be an integrated one. Thus complete self-realization requires not only an integrated self but an integrated society that will sustain the integrated self. The self-realization theory accordingly projects the central criterion of integration over onto social dispositions as well as personality dispositions. This demand leads us into another chapter of the self-realization theory.

CHAPTER 9

THE SELF-REALIZATION THEORY (*Continued*)

Social Integration

THAT THE REALIZATION of an integrated self requires an integrated society is apparent the moment one fully perceives the implications of roles as important elements in personality integration. Men as social animals cannot escape the responsibilities of roles in their social conduct, and roles are derived from social institutions. If there are conflicts among the institutions of a society, these are bound to be reflected in the roles which men are expected to perform. And these roles become embodied in the personality structures of the men who perform them. Any man, then, who participates in two or more institutions which are not adequately integrated with each other and between which conflicts arise, will find these conflicts reflected back into his personality structure as conflicts between roles he is under obligation to fulfill.

Some of the hardest moral conflicts a man is called upon to resolve are those arising from conflicts between roles. Such have been the conflicts between church and state, between legislation and custom, between group loyalty and the rules of an institution. Shall a student "tell on" another student who is cheating? Shall a witness called before a Senate investigating committee

give the names of friends he associated with at a time of his suspected radical leanings?

In two ways an inadequately integrated society can interfere with a man's self-realization. For, first, it can block him in carrying out roles even though the roles are adequately integrated in his personality. A labor strike or lock-out stops all work in the factory and eliminates all the roles demanding realization in all the persons concerned. But worse, as already noticed, inadequately integrated social institutions reflect their conflicts back into the personality structure of those participating in the society as conflicts of roles embodied in these persons' selves.

Social integration thus becomes as important as personal integration for a self-realization theory. The theory demands integration throughout the whole domain of human conduct.

What constitutes social integration need not delay us long, for the problem was examined in the chapter on cultural relativism. It is the integration of social institutions. These are the dispositions or capacities for social action. According to the self-realizationist, a conflict of institutions is intrinsically a cultural lag.

We distinguished in that chapter between communal and functional institutions. It is functional institutions that are the chief source of social conflicts, and it is the integration of these that most concerns the self-realizationist. There are, of course, many kinds of functional institutions. But in typical civilized societies there is one that has a general priority over the others. This is the political institution, the government.

The Functional Society

Plato is again the self-realizationist from whom we can get the spirit of the theory in its simplest and most uncompromisingly consistent form. Though his presentation of the integrated personality was faulty, his insight as to the nature of the integration required for his ethical view was thoroughly sound. This is

equally true of his presentation of the integrated society. He developed what is appropriately called a *functional society.*

To do this, he began by asking what are the necessary needs for men gathered into a society. He found, first, a group of economic needs. Basically these were food, shelter, and clothing. He then observed that these needs would most efficiently be served by men specializing in the techniques for providing these needs. So, he advocated economic specialization. Certain men would be designated to specialize in farming, others in carpentry, others in weaving. These occupations became primary functions in the state. Moreover, these functions would be carried on with greatest efficiency if the men selected to perform them were those who had natural aptitudes for the required techniques. So, he recommended aptitude tests.

But in order that these basic functions should be carried on with the least waste of time, a number of subsidiary functions emerged. Merchants and storekeepers were necessary for the most efficient distribution of goods. Transportation was necessary and, for shipping over water, specialists in navigation—sea captains and sailors. And so on, all for the most efficient production and distribution of the basic economic needs for the health of the citizens. Clearly for highest efficiency these functions should be fully integrated so that they would be carried on with a minimum of friction. From such an integration of functional institutions would develop the economically healthy society.

But besides a sound economic organization, an enduring healthy society would need protection against aggression from surrounding societies. This need generates the function of an army. On the principle of specialization for maximum efficiency, Plato recommended a standing army of professional soldiers. These men would be most carefully selected for their courage and intelligence. Plato was particularly concerned about this group because of the brute power concentrated in their hands. He was acutely aware of their perennial ability to stage a military coup, take over the reins of government for their own

aggrandizement, and so institute a tyranny. Tyranny for Plato was the worst calamity that could befall a society. It is a mode of government furthest removed from the balanced integration of functions in an ideal functional society. A despotism is in a constant state of inner conflict and simmering rebellion. To minimize the danger of a military despotism, Plato proposed severe aptitude tests for intelligence, for the sense of responsibility, and for courage to face physical and mental threats and temptations to corruption; and he would institute a prolonged and rigorous emotional, physical, and intellectual education toward the faithful and effective performance of the military and policing function. The men selected for the standing army in Plato's Republic would be the best-integrated persons in the society and the most carefully educated for emotional balance, physical stamina, and intellectual judgment. They would be the cream of the society's manhood—and, it should be added, womanhood, for in carrying on the functions of the state the women were, for Plato, as eligible as the men.

There was, however, yet another essential function required for the realization of an integrated functional society. That was the governing function. The various functions, economic and military, could not be expected to operate harmoniously of themselves. A supremely necessary function was that of overseeing the various functions, keeping them at high efficiency, adjusting them to one another, resolving conflicts wherever they should arise, and framing policy for foreign relations whenever external threats of aggression or actual attacks should occur. In Plato's conception, not many men would be required to carry out this function, but it was the most responsible function in the state. Plato would select the men for this function out of those trained for the military and policing function. They would be the cream of the cream. He called them the "guardians" of the Republic. They would be outstanding men of long experience in military discipline and action and in minor administration. Only men of 50 years or over would be eligible. They would be

selected as the wisest and most reliable men in the society. The responsibility of guiding the state and integrating its functions to the highest efficiency would be in their hands.

A functionally integrated society was in Plato's view a highly centralized one. It is difficult to imagine how it could be otherwise, for functions tend to fall apart and develop gaps and conflicts in their midst, unless there is a central governing institution whose function it is to keep the various functions integrated. Plato's general scheme for a fully integrated society seems to be correct in its main features, however much one may dispute over his details.

Plato conceived his ideal society on the model of the Greek city state of some tens of thousands. A civilized society today has to be conceived in terms of millions of persons. However, the large functional divisions would remain essentially as Plato conceived them. There would be the economic functions, the military, and the governmental. Instead of crafts, the economic units would now be industries. Farming would be conceived on a large scale, possibly in terms of huge communes if these are the most efficient social instruments for cultivating the land, but in smaller units where these prove more efficient. For modern warfare, universal military training would be necessary to provide manpower, but there would still be a specialized, highly trained officer corps. Research science to provide constantly improved instruments for war and industry and indeed also to improve methods of social organization would call for a large group of specialized scientists and engineers. Education would be even more essential for the citizenry than Plato realized and would be universal. And, as in Plato's Republic, the greatest care would be required to sort out men of different aptitudes, to place them in functions where they could be of the highest service, and to promote the ablest men in each function to positions of responsibility.

To integrate these functions a centralized governmental organization would be essential. And this, to handle the huge modern scientific-industrial society, would have to be a large

integrated institution in itself. Plato's simple method of recruiting the staff of the government would no longer be appropriate. The various departments of the government would require specialists trained for these government positions. As for the responsible heads of a modern integrated society, some special means would have to be devised to pick out, from the whole population, the ablest men of judgment and integrity. Numerous devices are available. It would still be essential that these men be highly educated and that they attain their positions of supreme responsibility only after much political experience. Once they are entrusted with the authority of guiding the state, however, this authority should be completely in their hands, to do whatever they judge necessary for the welfare of the state.

However, it is also part of the spirit of the self-realizationist's ideal that as much autonomy be granted to each state function and to each individual performing his function as is consonant with the integrative aim of all. A well-integrated man who has found his function in a well-integrated society will discover his fullest satisfaction in the fulfillment of that function. That is what he will most want to do. And he will meet no serious frustrations in doing it, because his achievements will be picked up in the co-operative acts of other men who find their satisfactions also in complementary functions integrated to carry through the over-all aim of the institution. And this dynamic autonomy of each function or institution, co-ordinated organically with every other one, will work out through the whole functional society so far as it is fully integrated. This ideal result is what we commonly know as *team play*. And such is the ideal functioning of a functional society.

The result of team play is the identification of every person with his team. Each man's aim is the aim of the team. Each man gets his satisfaction in carrying out his special function in the team, and this satisfaction comes to every man in the team if the various functions of the various men are well co-ordinated for the over-all achievement of the team.

So, in a play of a football team, each man has his separate

designated task. If the play is well conceived in terms of the potentialities of the opposing team (the reality of the situation), and every man performs his special job, the play comes off. It is the co-ordinated achievement of the whole team. Each man's role is a part of the total integrated act. Since this role is an element of each man's personality, his self in respect to that role is projected into the team. It becomes integrated with the roles of the other players for that play—and for every play of the game. The team in action consists in the realization of the roles of the players. These players' selves in respect to these roles become realized in their integration in the team—become actually identified with the team.

This identification process by which a self through its roles becomes integrated with its society through its institutions is the great insight of the self-realization theory. The gap between individual and society which plagued social hedonism is here completely bridged over. The only requirement is that the personality be well integrated in the roles it embodies in its structure and that the institutions of the society in which the person lives be integrated in their structures. Then these two integrated systems will inevitably mesh in a mutual integration. Indeed, they become one system, for each requires the other for its realization in action. An institution is a fiction or a vestige of past history unless it is embodied in the roles of living individuals who render it actual by their conduct. And the roles of a personality structure are just empty hopes bound to be frustrated unless they are co-ordinated with the social activity of a well-integrated institution. A person is literally incorporated in his society by this integrative process. And he realizes his self (his personality structure) most fully in the process by which he fulfills his roles in the integrated institutions of his society. He realizes himself most fully by becoming one with, by becoming identified with, the realization of the institutional structure of his society. A self-realizationist can then truthfully say that when the integrative process is operating, a person's society is that person's larger self. And it is this larger self which the in-

tegrative process is continually striving in man's experience to realize.

The only qualification for such realization is, as has been repeatedly remarked, that of the integration of the roles and institutions. But this is a happy qualification. For it not only bridges the gap between individual and society which split hedonism, but also furnishes a long range aim for conduct which was the great deficiency of the pragmatic theory. For the ideal of the self-realization ethics is toward ever more integration. So, in any problematic situation that arises, the self-realizationist is concerned not only to reduce the tensions in that particular situation, but also to consider the long range effects in producing the largest amount of co-operative integrated social relationships possible. So a self-realizationist would not have any difficulty in condemning Chamberlain's act of appeasing Hitler at Munich. For this act was catastrophically disintegrative of human relationships in its long-range consequences. It is sometimes necessary to accept present increase of tension and conflict in the interest of greater integration of human relationships in the future. And, for self-realization theory, the future is always the judge of past conduct in the integration of human relationships.

One last comment about the process of social integration. It is in the spirit of the self-realization theory that integration ordinarily works most smoothly from smaller centers of integration to larger and larger ones. It then proceeds in the manner of crystallization in a liquid medium. A center of integration consolidates and enlarges. It comes in contact with another center and under favorable conditions these join in a larger system, and so on. To be too concerned with distant centers of experience is not conducive to harmony. Let a man or a society see first that he is making the most of his integrative capacities and only strive for larger organizations when the realization of his more intimate relationships leads toward a larger system.

Of course, he must have the judgment to recognize when his lesser system actually is demanding for its fullest realization

a wider range of associations. This is the self-realizationist's way of reminding everyone that his first duty is to fulfill his own special functions and not to interfere with the functioning of other centers which are not his business. If everyone tends to his own business with a view to performing it to his highest capacity, he will generally most effectively further the harmonious integration of human affairs. If in the performance of his functions he meets frustrations, then it is time for him to look about and see what larger system will integrate the conflict. But it does not pay to borrow trouble.

Paradoxical as it may seem, this is a practical maxim long confirmed as the best way of increasing integration in human living. There are occasional exceptions. But as a rule even governments would do better in promoting the integrative harmony of the world if they would concentrate upon the integration of their own affairs and the harmonizing of such external conflicts as they encounter, instead of trying to integrate the whole world in uniform observance of their particular successful mode of integration. One reason for the truth of this maxim is that no two human contexts or centers of integration are ever exactly the same. What will be the natural integrative process for one center may be a source of violent conflict for another. In this regard there is an element of staunch individualism (or, better, autonomy) in the self-realization doctrine, even though it is predominantly a doctrine of the integration of the self with its society.

Summary of the Theory

Because the self-realization theory is rather involved, a concluding statement of its ethical criteria becomes advisable even though it will entail some repetition.

This theory is concerned primarily with dispositions rather than acts. It describes the good man and the good society and holds that good acts of conduct will follow whenever these good organizations of dispositions go into action.

Ethical goodness is defined as the integration of these dispositions. By *integration* is meant the absence of frustration in the operation of these dispositions in acts of conduct. If the dispositions do not get in one another's way when they go into action, they can be described as harmoniously interrelated or, briefly, as integrated.

Ethically the most important set of dispositions in a personality structure are roles for social action. These roles are determined by the social institutions of a man's society. At the same time social institutions are dispositions of a society and constitute its social structure. It follows that the roles of a personality structure interlock with the institutions of a social structure which determine these roles. If there is no conflict in this relationship, a personality is, by definition, integrated with the social institutions.

A personality disposition is said to become realized when it goes into action without obstruction or frustration. Accordingly, a role embodied in a personality becomes realized when it is functioning in a social institution in which it is integrated in co-operation with the roles of other persons carrying on their functions within the institutions. Thus a person comes to realize himself in the integration of his roles with the institutions of his society. He becomes united with his society. His society becomes the projection of his self in which he realizes his self—provided that his roles are in fact integrated with the social institutions of his society. He realizes his personality through his integration with the social institutions of his society. And these institutions in turn find their realization through the active integration of his roles with them.

This integrative process in a well-integrated society goes on similarly for every person functioning co-operatively in an institution. Thus there develops an integrative interrelationship among all the persons co-operating with one another in carrying out their various functions within an institution.

Moreover, in so far as the various institutions of a total society are integrated with one another, all the persons function-

ing in these institutions become integrated with one another. A totally integrated, harmoniously functioning society of great numbers of persons can be developed ideally in this manner.

Since integration of human dispositions is descriptively defined as good, the more of this integration, the better. There are two ways of increasing integration, and these are the quantitative standards for this ethical theory.

One of these ways is intensively to increase the degree of integration. This brings in the conception of an organic whole, in which every function is so dependent on every other function that any alteration in one affects all the others. This interrelationship is often described as that in which every function acts as both means and end in respect to every other function. This character of organicity is subject to degrees. There can, for instance, be a high degree of integration in a society in which different persons can be substituted for the same function and in which some functions are much less necessary for the efficient working of an institution than others. Also a function can sometimes be altered without requiring much readjustment of other functions. Then there are functions which require that they be attached to a system in order to operate but which can be detached from the system with little or no effect upon the other functions. By such alternatives, degrees of integration show up.

The second way of generating a quantitative standard is extensive. Given a certain degree of organicity, the greater the number of functions or persons included in the system the greater the amount of integration achieved.

According to the self-realizationist there is abundant evidence for a dynamic tendency within a personality and within human society to increase integration in both of these ways. This dynamic tendency operates as a selective system. Persons and institutions in their continuous aim to overcome obstacles and frustrations to the attainment of greater integration frequently make mistakes which increase the frustrations and which require correction and renewed integrative effort.

The ethical ideal for a person is the well-adjusted, well-

integrated, all-round man effectively functioning in his society. For society it is the integration of the largest number of persons that can attain a high degree of institutional effectiveness. Size can be unwieldy and diminish effective integration. However, in the present world with its instruments of speedy transportation and communication, where every society is rubbing elbows with every other, the practical ideal for a self-realizationist could hardly be other than the institutional integration of all men into a single harmonious world society.

Consideration of Objections

Since the self-realization theory has a long history, many typical objections have in the course of time emerged. Those that seem most serious will be taken up here. Some of these will be found ineffective and irrelevant to the formulation given in the preceding pages, for I have presented the theory in what I have thought its strongest formulation.

1. An objection raised by nearly all critics of the theory is the *vagueness, ambiguity, or even meaninglessness of the terms self and realization* as employed by self-realizationists.

So far as the term *self* is concerned, this is not an objection that can be brought against the exposition of the theory given in these chapters. The self is specifically identified with a man's personality structure. This is a well-confirmed psychological concept. The question cannot be seriously raised today in view of the extensive research and accumulation of data on the subject. These data show that the human organism possesses a personality structure, which has certain general features common to the species and certain features unique to each individual traceable to his heredity, acculturation, personal history, and the like. There are indeed many theories as to the most adequate way of systematizing these data. We do not yet know for certain just what this personality structure is. But this sort of deficiency is one shared by all empirical concepts and hypotheses. The description offered in Chapter 8 is along the main

lines of rather well-established contemporary theories on the subject. A self-realizationist who bases his ethical view on contemporary theories of personality structure is on very firm ground. His conception of the self is then as secure as the most advanced studies on the subject. There is no ambiguity in what he is referring to, though there are numerous theories as to the most fully confirmed hypothesis for describing the object.

Many critics find difficulty in accepting the self-realizationist's expansion of the self into the social environment. The data referred to, however, are accepted today by anthropologists, sociologists, and social psychologists as fully as the evidences for the evolution of species are accepted by biologists. They are nothing other than the evidence for acculturation, for the embodiment of social relationships through learning into the personality structure of an individual born into a cultural pattern. Some anthropologists have been so impressed with the absorption of a human personality into his culture as practically to deny that a person possesses any traits that are not culture-given. Some writers in the self-realization school have made suggestions that go beyond the anthropological data (not without some evidence to back them up), but the anthropological data are all that are needed for the concept of the socially expanded self as this concept is used for the basic ethical criterion of a self-realization theory.

As for the concept of "realization," this follows from the very concept of a disposition. It is a well-confirmed empirical concept. A habit like pipe smoking or speaking English is a disposition. These dispositions are realized in action whenever a person smokes his pipe or expresses himself (note this idiom!) in English. That is all there is to it. Of course, if the critic intends to question the evidence for personality dispositions (and, let us add, social institutions), that is another matter. He will have a lot of evidence to explain away. His results are likely to be more objectionable than the concept he was objecting to.

Such typical traditional objections to the concept of "self" and its "realization" can be considered negligible.

2. Another type of objection is that the theory is "metaphysical" or that the metaphysics supporting it is inadequate, or possibly meaningless. The reference here is generally to the Hegelian or organistic metaphysics which is in the background of most treatments of the self-realizationist theory since Hegel. If metaphysics is considered as a world hypothesis, which is simply an hypothesis as to how the totality of accumulated evidences fit together—that is, as to the probable nature of things—it is no objection that an ethical theory gains substantiation by fitting into a metaphysical theory. There is that much more evidence for it.

However, Plato and Aristotle and all the pre-Hegelian self-realizationists were not Hegelians. The theory is not tied to a particular world hypothesis, even though it fits most harmoniously into the organistic view.

As this ethical theory has been developed in this and the preceding chapter, no reference was made to any metaphysical view. The theory is offered solely on the evidence of psychology and the social sciences, and certain other data having to do with value theory.

So, the objection that the self-realization theory presupposes a metaphysics can be set aside.

3. A more serious objection is that the theory in its social development comes out in support of a totalitarian society. There is, I think, no question about this observation. It is obvious in Plato and Hegel and in most of the post-Hegelians who have pushed the theory consistently to its detailed limit for its social ideal. Where this ideal limit is softened, as in Aristotle and a number of the post-Hegelians, they can be said to be compromising, or just not carrying the view to its consistent limit. Many exponents of this view stop with the ethics of the individual, and do not suggest the projection of the integration principle into the functional society.

Is this outcome of this view, however, a genuine objection? May it not be the case that the functional society is the ethically ideal society? To object because one has been differently accul-

turated is not convincing. It accounts for one's suspicions about the theory, or for one's antipathy, but it does not justify the objection empirically. The self-realizationist has his well-documented objection to all the less-integrated forms of social relationship. One can find these in Plato's fascinating account of the successive forms of deteriorating society in Books VIII and IX of his *Republic,* and in Hegel's dialectic. Even Aristotle, though more tolerant, is critical of the less-integrated forms of society. With so much good evidence and the over-all rationality of the functional society, is not this possibly the ethically ideal society?

The fact that the totalitarian societies we now know, which approximate the ideal of a functional society, have uniformly turned out to have a large, or even preponderant, element of despotism in them should not be laid to the account of the self-realizationist ideal. There is not supposed to be any despotism in the ideal functional society. There must be discipline whenever team play breaks down. But the end is for functional integration, not for blind submission. And when the team play and integration are complete, each function carries on autonomously of its own free will, so to speak, only guided by the sympathetic oversight of the central government. Possibly one of the best actual examples of a functional society was that of the medieval feudal-ecclesiastical society at the height of its prosperity in twelfth century Europe—at least as this is described by some of its enthusiastic admirers.

The observation that a functional society is an ideal totalitarianism does not amount to a criticism at all, unless it can be shown that there is some important ethical value intrinsically lacking in this conception of social integration. But this would be a quite different line of criticism from the present one. And this is, I believe, the one objection that the self-realization theory cannot fully answer.

4. This objection comes from the heart of the ethics of hedonism. It asks what does a functional society do about the hap-

piness of its citizens? This is a refrain that runs through the several books of Plato's *Republic*. It is the one difficulty that really bothered Plato. He had the honesty to keep bringing it up as the integrative ideal tightened from detail to detail in his development of the totally integrated society.

If one looks closely at what it is that is integrated throughout, it is the drive for achievement. Integration consists in the elimination of frustration. It is the maximization of achievement values. But what about the consummatory values? What about pleasure which emerges conspicuously, not in the progress toward achievement, but in the consummatory area of a purposive structure. And remember that the drive toward achievement in the shortest possible time gives way in this area to enjoyment of the consummatory pleasures for the longest possible time. Barring external pressure, the consummatory values of pleasurable enjoyment take precedence and legislate over the values of achievement. This difficulty the self-realization theory has much trouble in explaining away.

Plato produced four arguments, none of which is convincing to a hedonist, or anyone else who sees the force of the objection. A common recourse of the self-realizationist is to identify pleasure with the absence or reduction of frustration. This is a half truth, but the evidence is against this identification. The enjoyment of a consummatory experience is not merely the negative activity of reducing frustrations. It is a positive experience that takes precedence (when there is no external pressure) over the whole achievement process. The self-realization theory is a conative-achievement theory of ethics. It makes no satisfactory provision for man's consummatory values—the pivotal values for a man's happiness.

Self-realization sets up integration as the dominant value in man's life. Is there any justification for this allocation—particularly in the face of the hedonic fact of the dominance of pleasure over achievement in the consummatory area of a free purposive act? So far as I can see there is no justification within the con-

sistent development of the self-realization theory itself. A justification in part—and a very important part—does come however from another ethical theory which ties into the integration concept of the self-realization theory. This is the evolutionary theory of ethics, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

THE EVOLUTIONARY THEORY OF ETHICS

The Call for an Evolutionary Theory of Ethics

WHEN DARWIN DISCOVERED the key to the understanding of the origin of living species in the concept of the survival of the fittest, it was immediately felt that this concept might have a significant bearing on ethical values. Darwin himself led the way in some important chapters of his book, *The Descent of Man*. Throughout the nineteenth century many writers developed ethical theories based on evolutionary principles. The enthusiasm among the philosophers for this approach died out, however, by the end of the century. Its continuance in the twentieth century has been largely due to the work of biologists, medical men and some anthropologists, who persisted in the belief that natural selection, adaptation, and survival furnished a moral criterion of crucial importance. Even before looking into the details of the issue, there can be found a probability that they are right.

The question of adaptation and survival crops up over and over again among the empirical theories we have studied. The cultural relativists had to cope with it when they came up against the problem of cultural lag. For the most serious form of cultural lag occurs when the traditional institutions of a

society are no longer adapted to their environment. The problem of adaptation and survival comes up in social hedonism in the arguments for the social contract. Both Hobbes and Locke stress the importance of security which individuals gain by uniting themselves into a society. The great difficulty with the pragmatic ethics of the social situation ultimately turned out to be the absence of a long range criterion to avoid a succession of appeasements that could lead to social disaster. And finally the self-realization theory for all of its development of the efficient integrated functional society is unable to justify the discipline it entails against the pressure of human impulse demanding individual freedom for personal satisfaction and happiness. Yet this could easily be justified by the principle of security and adaptation to a pressing environment.

It would appear that each of these theories in one way or another is demanding an effective criterion of security, adaptation, and survival to be relieved of certain otherwise irremediable difficulties. So they all point to a degree of dependence upon an ethical criterion of survival value for their own integrity and adequacy.

If an adequate theory of survival value for man and human society should be found, it appears that this would act as a keystone by which all these empirical theories we have studied could be brought into functional relation with each other in a mutually supporting system of natural ethical norms. So, the configuration of our ethical studies up to this point yields a presumptive probability that some form of evolutionary ethical theory is empirically justifiable and is exactly what is needed to round out the evidence required for an adequate empirical view of ethics.

The question automatically arises: What then has blocked off this promising development toward an evolutionary theory of ethics and its concept of survival value? The answer is mainly three serious misunderstandings of the purport of the theory. I do not allude to the emotional resistance to the Darwinian theory from traditional philosophical as well as religious schools of

thought. Actually this resistance was rather fully dispelled in intellectual circles before the theory dropped out of central concern among philosophical writers on ethics. The three misunderstandings to which I refer are of a purely intellectual sort. We will run over them briefly.

① *Mistaken Views of Evolutionary Ethics*

The first type of error is the most serious and the one repeated in practically every textbook on ethics that mentions an evolutionary ethical theory. This error consists in the statement that the concept "survival of the fittest" does not say anything. The argument is that when this phrase is expanded it is equivalent to asserting that "those which survive are those which survive," that the phrase is a mere tautology, which simply repeats twice the obvious fact that in the domain of living organisms there are some that survive and propagate and some that do not. The term *fittest* looks like a value term, but actually it just makes the factual observation that some organisms live and some die. This fact has no relevancy to ethical values.

This argument, however, disposes of Darwin's description of the process of natural selection much too easily. Proffered and accepted by men who presumably have studied and understood the process as biologists explain it, the argument is one which we may be amazed they find plausible. We shall examine the process in some detail later. But as a reply to this argument, all that needs to be pointed out here is that the process of natural selection is a complex dynamic mechanism involving many factors and has all the characteristics of a selective system. From parent stock through the dynamics of biological propagation, a large number of varied progeny are produced. These offspring are then selected in terms of their adaptation to their environment. Those that are selected (and survive) are the more fully adapted, and they are the ones that are taken into the system and propagate the next generation. The less adapted

are eliminated in one way or another in competition with the others and do not propagate to carry on their characteristics to the next generation. By *fittest* Darwin means those that have been selected by this complex process to carry on the characteristics of the species. The proper expansion of the phrase "survival of the fittest" is "the selection through the dynamics of biological propagation of the offspring most closely adapted to the living conditions of the environment so that they can propagate for the next generation." This is not a tautological expression!

The only objection the ethical critics can legitimately make to *fittest* so understood is that it does not signify "most valuable of a certain sort"—that is, that *fit,* or *adapted,* is not a value term. But this is another line of argument than the first. The argument we have been answering is one which said that *fittest,* or *most adapted,* meant mere survival. The new line of argument is that even though "survival of the fittest" may mean a particular mode of selection by a selective system, the selection is not a value selection. The more adapted cannot be said to be in any ethical sense better than the less adapted. This is a quite different issue and will be fully met before this chapter is finished.

The second misunderstanding that has turned many persons away from an evolutionary ethics is the oversimplified "tooth-and-claw" formulation of the theory. This is the view that natural selection takes place in a series of merciless gladiatorial combats in which the winner lives and the loser dies on the spot. Natural selection is definitely a competitive affair. And sometimes the competition comes to a head in a bodily combat, or something equivalent. But as the process is observed in detail it does not in general suggest a struggle between competitors. The following description by one of the most competent contemporary authorities on this subject will dissipate this notion:

> Struggle is sometimes involved, but it usually is not. . . . Advantage in differential reproduction is usually a peaceful process in which the concept of struggle is irrelevant. It more often involves

such things as better integration into the ecological situation, maintenance of a balance of nature, more efficient utilization of available food, better care of young, elimination of intragroup discords (struggles) that might hamper reproduction, exploitation of environmental possibilities that are not objects of competition or are less effectively exploited by others. . . . It is to be added that in intragroup selection . . . struggle is not necessarily or even usually of the essence. Precisely the opposite, selection in favor of harmonious or co-operative association is certainly common. It is a crude concept of natural selection to think of it simply as something imposed on the species from the outside. It is not, as in the metaphor often used with reference to Darwinian selection, a sieve through which organisms are sifted, some variations passing (surviving) and some being held back (dying). It is rather a process intricately woven into the whole life of the group, equally present in the life and death of individuals, in the associative relationships of the population, and in their extraspecific adaptations. . . . Selection is not primarily a process of elimination. It is a process of differential reproduction and this involves complex and delicate interplay with those genetic factors in populations that are the substantial basis of evolutionary continuity and change.[1]

In saying that natural selection is not a sieve-like process Simpson is showing that it is the sort of selection I have referred to as that of a selective system. This passage in still further detail exposes the error of thinking that "survival of the fittest" can only mean "survival of those who survive." But our purpose in quoting this passage is to correct the mistaken idea that natural selection implies a tooth-and-claw struggle for survival or sudden elimination. Even Darwin's account does not substantiate this interpretation, though he stresses struggle more than a contemporary biologist would.

The correction of this misinterpretation of natural selection is not essential to the confirmation of an evolutionary theory of ethics. But it makes the theory more acceptable to many persons. If the evidence fully supported a tooth-and-claw conception, we should have to follow the evidence. But actually the

[1] G. G. Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution* (New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1949), pp. 222–224.

evidence only partially supports it. This is clear from what Simpson writes, but it was also indicated by the almost unanimous testimony of all the empirical ethical theories (and indeed of the nonempirical too) that the heart of morality lay in social harmony rather than conflict. Thomas Huxley was so repelled by what he thought natural selection entailed in the way of a tooth-and-claw competition that he argued that morality stood opposed to the forces of natural selection and that it was man's moral duty to keep natural selection away from human affairs. As I shall seek to show later in the final chapter, Thomas Huxley had something of a point. But he was mistaken in thinking an evolutionary theory of ethics would be antisocial. On the contrary, natural selection operates in man through social solidarity.

A third mistaken notion is exemplified by the work of another member of the Huxley family, the contemporary biologist, Julian Huxley. This is the continuous progress theory which endows the later "higher" forms of life with superior value over the "lower" forms. And thereby man, together with his successful modes of behavior, becomes an object of very high value. Like the previous misinterpretation this one would not affect the justification of an evolutionary theory of ethics. But the assumption that "higher" forms of life can be equated with higher forms of value turns many persons against evolutionary ethics because this identification seems so obviously to them a mere play on words. However, if the evidence supported the continuous progress theory, we should definitely follow the evidence and accept Julian Huxley's interpretation. But the evidence does not appear to go in that direction.

First of all, we must be clear that what we are identifying with value here is adaptation. We are not concerned with the question of whether the "higher" forms of life are happier, or more conforming to their customs, or more integrated, than the "lower" forms. Only the last of these criteria can even plausibly be correlated with the "higher" forms of life. And though Herbert Spencer made the integration value crucial to his

evolutionary ethical theory, the correlation is far from an identification. The value quality that is intrinsic to the process of natural selection (if it is accepted as such) is adaptation and this alone. So, if the continuous progress interpretation of evolution is to be accepted, what is being stated is that the "higher" forms of life are better adapted to their environments than the "lower" forms.

Second, we must be clear as to what we mean by progress in this context. Progress, in view of our discussion in the preceding paragraph, can only relevantly mean that the forms that have emerged later in the evolution of life are better adapted than those that emerged earlier. The view would also probably have to be interpreted to mean that all forms of life are continuously in competition with one another and that the later forms are superior in their adaptation compared with all the earlier forms.

Neither of these conditions happens to be true. The competition of natural selection actually goes on only within limited zones. Organisms in different zones do not compete and have no selective influence upon one another. It follows that organisms adapted to their own life zones are not significantly comparable as to their degrees of adaptation. Each organism may be fully adapted to his own life zone. From this, finally, it follows that the conception of a continuous evolutionary progress from "lower" to "higher" forms which ignores the restriction of competitive adaptation to an operation within life zones is factually impossible. On this point Darwin wrote with a bit of a twinkle in his eye:

> On our theory the continued existence of lowly organisms offers no difficulty: for natural selection or the survival of the fittest, does not necessarily include progressive development—it only takes advantage of such variations as arise and are beneficial to each creature under its complex relations of life. And it may be asked what advantage, as far as we can see, would it be to an infusorian animalcule —to an intestinal worm—or even an earthworm, to be highly organized? If it were no advantage, these forms would be left, by natural selection, unimproved or but little improved, and might re-

main for indefinite ages in their present lowly condition. And geology tells us that some of the lowest forms, as the infusoria and rhizopods, have remained for an enormous period in nearly their present state.[2]

In their own life zone the infusoria have been completely adapted for ages, and man as an organic species in his life zone has also become highly adapted. In terms of adaptation one is as good as the other. And we do not compete with each other. A confirmable evolutionary ethical theory will not appeal to any conception of continuous progress.

It does not follow, however, from the foregoing that there are not regions of evolutionary progress in adaptation. Such progress does occur within life zones. Within its own zone a species may become progressively more and more adapted to its conditions.

With these three misconceptions out of the way, we can now turn to the description of the process of natural selection, from which it will become clear that the structure of it constitutes a selective system.

The Process of Natural Selection

If the process of natural selection operates as a selective system, we shall expect to find (1) a dynamic element comparable to the drive in the structure of a purposive act, (2) trial elements comparable to the trial-and-error acts selected by a purposive drive with its reference to a condition of quiescence, and (3) that peculiarity of a split dynamics which assures that the same dynamic element which normatively selects for the correct trial act likewise activates the trials which are selected.

These three elements do appear in the operation of natural selection:

1. The dynamic element is the vital energy of an interbreed-

[2] Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species* (New York, Modern Library, Inc., n.d.), pp. 94–95.

ing population, and the demand of this element is for the reproductive survival of the species, which may be called the reproductive reference.

2. The trials are the varied offspring of the population.

3. The dynamics for reproductive survival is the same vital energy which propagates the offspring and selects the more adapted from the less adapted in terms of the reality of the situation. The dynamics is split, and the unadapted offspring in one way or another are deprived of vital energy and propagating power. In this way they are rejected in the process of natural selection, and those more adapted carry on the energy of the group and propagate the next generation.

In oversimple terms the process of natural selection works through the propagation of an excess of offspring over what their environment will support. The offspring are then driven to compete with one another for survival. Since by the laws of heredity no two individuals are just alike even though all carry on the main pattern of their parents and of the group, some will be more fully adapted to survive and improve their condition in their particular environment than others. These will survive and propagate vigorously. The less adapted will perish or be pushed aside and not propagate at all or very little. Thus through the vital energy of an interbreeding group there is a natural normative selection of the more adapted as opposed to the less adapted.

If then environmental conditions change or part of the population gets separated from the other by mountains, water, or distance so that interbreeding no longer occurs between the two groups, gradually they will change their characteristics and there will be two biological species where before there was one.

At this point one is sure to ask, what has all this to do with human conduct and ethical criteria? Suppose we admit that adaptation is a value—call it survival value, if we wish. Since it is generated through a selective system with a split dynamics and a natural norm, it can be said to have a claim to be called a value. But what connection could there be between such survival

value and any human decision of conduct? Either one is a well-adapted variation of the human species or a poorly adapted one. In the former case he will survive and prosper according to natural selection, in the other he will be pushed about or perhaps die young and be done with it. What could a person possibly do about it?

It just happens that man alone of all creatures can do a lot about his survival. This happens, however, because man is an exceptionally intelligent animal and an exceptionally social animal with amazing capacity for tool making and communication by means of a highly articulated language. This power of language is perhaps his greatest endowment; for by means of it he can transmit his experience and the knowledge he has acquired in his lifetime to his offspring and generations unborn. By means of it he can do what no other organism has ever done on this planet. He can transmit his acquired characteristics. The power this has given man, especially since he discovered writing and more recently printing, is prodigious.

The result of these capacities is that natural selection has little direct impact on man as an individual organism. Its impact is on man's societies, his cultural patterns. These are what natural selection requires should be adequately adapted to their environments in order that man survive. In man, and apparently only in man, organic evolution is almost completely cushioned off and the vital energy of the human interbreeding population is directed upon a cultural evolution. Man can do a lot about his social organizations. It is one of his most important ethical obligations according to nearly every ethical theory. So, this is how evolutionary theory and survival value come into contact with ethical theory and moral value.

Cultural Evolution

As a solitary animal man is a weak and insecure organism. He cannot run very fast nor climb trees very well. He has nothing much to defend himself with. He would have to live on such

fruits and shellfish as he could pick up. And he would be a tempting morsel for any carnivorous animal half his size. But give him the intelligence to use tools, put a club in his hands, and he becomes dangerous. Give him the desire and capacity to associate with other men in a group and he becomes genuinely powerful and secure. Give him the capacity for articulated speech, so that he can transmit his knowledge and skills in the use and making of tools to other members of his group as an enduring tradition from generation to generation, and he becomes the most adaptable and the most powerful species with which he has any biological contact. Long ago man had developed to such a stage of social organization that he had nothing much to fear, no strong competition in his life zone, except from other groups of men also socially organized. From this stage on, the evolutionary development of man has been primarily in terms of social organizations or cultural patterns of competing human societies. The occasions for competition between human societies have been numerous, but one of the most fundamental and continuous causes of competition has been the pressure of populations requiring larger or better areas for obtaining a food supply.

In this competition within man's life zone some cultural patterns are more effective than others. Cultural patterns thus come to take the place of species of organisms in the process of natural selection. Organic evolution is largely replaced in man by cultural evolution. Cultural patterns now virtually become biological species competing for survival.

The pressures of natural selection are now directly upon the cultural patterns for the elimination of the less adapted and the favoring of the more adapted. Man as a biological species, as a biological organism, is thus to a large extent protected from the direct impact of natural selection. Inevitably, those men best adapted to a better adapted cultural pattern will find themselves in a more favored position in their society and so possibly will be in a more favored position to propagate and transmit their favorable traits to the next generation. But this

is by no means always to be counted on and in some contemporary societies the reverse has come about. The poorer classes have propagated faster than the more prosperous, and even the sickly and those of low mentality have had such effective social protection that they propagate freely and transmit their biological weaknesses into later generations. This fact has so greatly concerned some biologists that they fear a deterioration of the human stock and have urged a vigorous campaign for some form of socially compulsory eugenics. The point to be noticed here, however, is how completely a highly developed social organization can protect the individual organism from the direct impact of natural selection. In man cultural evolution has largely supplanted organic evolution.

Nevertheless, it is the same vital energy that is the dynamic agency in this new mode of selection, but the energy is directed differently. It is now directed into the cultural pattern. It is not the individual organism that is under adaptive selection in man's life zone so much as the cultural pattern under which he lives.

Now, since a cultural pattern and its various institutions are supported by intelligent organisms who can use foresight and within limits can modify their environment by their decisions and invent tools to do their work, it is within the voluntary power of the members of a society to modify or change their cultural pattern to keep it adapted. By such intelligent foresight men can ward off a lot of frustration resulting from gradually intensifying cultural lag, and can even by intelligent invention and planning prevent the society's perishing at the hands of an initially better adapted neighbor that has risen in aggressive competition.

What such foresighted action means is that the wise government of a society recognizes the dominance of the natural norm of social adaptation operating through natural selection in the situation before it, and takes measures to conform to that norm and become better adapted to its environment before some calamity resulting from its failure of adaptation should overtake it. Viewed in this way, adaptation clearly becomes an ethical

norm. Under conditions of emergency it is unquestionably the dominant ethical norm. For what is happiness worth, or freedom or ancient tradition or any other values dear to man, if the society which protects these for him proves unadapted to its environing pressures, unable to preserve itself, and liable to perish? Only under conditions of social security can a man benefit from any other values which he is heir to. For a man must be alive to have any pleasures or achievements, and he has security of life only within the cultural organization of a society adequately adapted to its environment.

This is the contribution of the evolutionary theory to ethical evaluation. It is a contribution no empirical ethics can safely neglect.

Darwin's Development of the Theory

Nearly all of these ethical applications with some further details can be found in Darwin's *The Descent of Man.* The importance of Darwin's theory for the rounding out of the empirical approach to ethics, the keenness of his insights, and the neglect of his contribution by recent writers on ethics are such that I believe we owe it to him to follow through his argument as closely as we can just as he develops it in the book above.

He begins by pointing out that man's strength as a social animal he owed to his weakness as a solitary animal. A certain Duke of Argyll had thought he found a strong bit of evidence against Darwin's evolutionary theory in the fact of the survival of so weak an organism as man. The Duke observed that the human frame had diverged from other animals in the direction of greater physical helplessness and weakness, a divergence of a sort completely impossible according to natural selection.

Darwin promptly turns this evidence against the Duke on the precise point that the course of evolution, in so far as it involved man, turned from organic evolution to a cultural evolution. Darwin not only accepts the Duke's evidence for the

weakness of man as a solitary animal, but he elaborates upon it.

He says he does not know whether in bodily size and strength man was descended from some small species like the chimpanzee or from a great powerful one like the gorilla. So for himself he cannot be as sure as the Duke that man has deteriorated in physique from some stronger ancestry. In fact, Darwin continues, he cannot fail to observe that an animal like the gorilla, possessing such great size, strength, and ferocity that he could defend himself from all enemies, would not be likely to develop high intelligence or to become social. And this would have checked the acquisition of an exceptional capacity for learning and invention and such social traits as sympathy and love of one's fellows. It appears then that it would have been of immense advantage to man for his mode of adaptation to have sprung from some comparatively weak creature.

Darwin then goes into great detail about the evolutionary advantages to man of his springing from a weak creature. To make up for lack of speed and strength, man had to develop his intellect and insight in the use of objects as tools. Having no natural weapons like teeth or claws, he had to invent weapons such as clubs, spears, darts. His weakness would also induce him to give and receive aid from his fellow men, and so compensate for his solitary weakness by group strength.

The adaptive advantages for man of these traits of intelligence and social solidarity would, on evolutionary principles, cause them to become more and more highly developed. When finally tribe began to compete with tribe, the advantages of these traits would be further increased. Darwin submits that with such acceleration under favorable conditions, the operation of natural selection would have sufficed to raise man to his present high position in the organic scale.

Having reached this point, Darwin has not only fully squelched the Duke in his own evidence, but has brought the reader a long way upon the positive course of his argument. For we now see the importance for man's survival not only of his intelligence but of his social traits.

Darwin's next step is to show how greatly man's physical structure is protected by his intelligence working through his social organization and shielded from the impact of natural selection. Man can move from one environment to another, from the tropics to the arctic without change of physical character (or not much). Where other animals have to adapt by physical changes of skin covering, man adapts by clothing and shelter and fire. Man can adapt to wide varieties of food conditions. Where other animals have to be provided with special physical features for obtaining their food, man learns to hunt, to cultivate, to fish. So man's physical organism remains unchanged in the most varied conditions. Through his purposive intelligent behavior, he can adapt to almost any conditions on the earth's surface.

But Darwin points out that this immunity to evolutionary selection does not include man's intellectual and social traits. These traits are variable as any other animal traits. Where they are adaptively as important as they are for man, it is only to be expected that they will be positively weighted by natural selection. Darwin sees this occurring particularly through tribal competition among primitive men.

As to intelligence, those tribes which included the greatest number of resourceful men, who invented the best weapons and traps and means of defense, would tend to prosper over those that were not so favored. The favored tribes would tend to propagate faster and absorb or shoulder out the less favored. From remotest times, Darwin observes, successful tribes have supplanted other tribes, as at the present day civilized nations are everywhere supplanting primitive peoples. He maintains this is due mainly, though not exclusively, to the superior arts (and now the science) of the more successful groups, and the arts are the product of intellect. Darwin concludes that it is highly probable that there has been a gradual perfecting of intellectual powers in man through the agency of natural selection.

And similarly he believes there has been a gradual perfecting

through natural selection of man's capacities for cultural social organization. For when two primitive tribes came into competition, the one which had the greater number of courageous, faithful, and sympathetic members who were always willing to warn one another of danger and to aid and defend one another would be better able to prosper, and in open conflict to conquer the other. The traits of courage, fidelity, willingness to obey and to accept discipline would be of great advantage for group survival. A tribe rich in these qualities would spread and be victorious over other tribes. Thus these social and (Darwin's term) "moral" qualities would tend to advance and be diffused throughout the world.

Does it occur to you that Darwin is here producing the bridge from individual isolated man in the "state of nature" to man in a state of mutual social confidence, which social hedonists like Hobbes and Locke were never able to do for lack of a dynamic sanction to produce that bridge? Darwin makes the bridge by the dynamics of natural selection. Weak isolated man was forced for his survival as a species to acquire social traits and to enter into social organization. Here is a sanction with power enough to support a bridge from egoistic impulse to social solidarity. The bridge could never be firmly established by the dynamics of individual impulse alone. A dynamic sanction that could overpower prudence by the demand of social duty was required. It is the dynamics of natural selection that has that power. Without the recognition of that power one whole side of ethical conduct and evaluation becomes a mystery. Darwin produced this evidence and the hypothesis that could clear up the mystery.

It is not simply that natural selection implanted social impulses in man and strengthened them to become sufficiently adaptive for man's social needs in a competitive environment. The importance of Darwin's discovery is that natural selection with its independent dynamics and its reproductive reference for the preservation of a species sets up a separate powerful monitor to see that any social group which is deficient in these qualities of social intelligence and cohesion becomes, under con-

ditions of emergency, eliminated or chastened and any competing better adapted society is preserved and favored.

Darwin is also aware of the importance of conscience for social solidarity. This in his view would be a moral trait which would be specially strengthened in man for its survival value. He writes:

> I fully subscribe to the judgment of those writers who maintain that of all the differences between man and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important. . . . It is summed up in that short but imperious word *ought*, so full of high significance. It is the most noble of all the attributes of man, leading him without a moment's hesitation to risk his life for that of a fellow-creature; or after due deliberation, impelled simply by the deep feeling of right or duty, to sacrifice it in some great cause.[3]

Following this passage Darwin gives his hypothesis as to how conscience is derived from the social instincts, guided with the aid of language by "the common opinion how each member ought to act for the common good." [4]

He wrote, of course, before the evidence came in from anthropological and psychiatric sources of the mechanisms by which the pattern of a culture becomes incorporated in the personality structure of members of that culture. He would have embraced these findings with delight as corroborating still further his evolutionary theory of ethics. There was no evidence when he wrote of the role of repressions in the personality make up, and so none for the operation of an authoritarian conscience rooted in childhood repressions. Since repressions are not open to voluntary control, nor even to the awareness of the individual, they operate with the blind insistence of inherited instinct. And since they are at the root of an authoritarian conscience, they account for the "imperious ought" Darwin describes. He himself quite naturally is, however, puzzled how to account for it. It does seem to him highly probable that any animal endowed

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 471.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 472.

with social instincts would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience as soon as his intellectual powers had become as well developed as in man. His explanations never get beyond accounting for the acquisition of a humane rational conscience.

But his insight is amazingly keen in singling out conscience as a most important representative in man of the dynamics of natural selection. There are overtones suggestive of the authoritarian conscience in some of his phrases. He must have sensed, though he could not explain, the blind "imperious" authoritarian demand upon an individual for social solidarity.

The recognition of a rigid authoritarian conscience embodying the social demands of a cultural pattern within the very heart of a man's personality is the last support necessary for firmly bridging the gap between individual impulse and the social demands of a fixed and stable culture. It becomes one of the most illuminating of recent discoveries for empirical ethics.

The presence of repressions and of a rigid conscience rooted in repressions over which a person has no voluntary control is a mystery from any purely individualistic point of view. Why man, whose biological superiority rests on his high intelligence and his exceptional capacity for learning and for voluntary control, should be hampered with repressions, which he can neither bring up into his consciousness nor control, seems biologically stupid. Why did not natural selection long ago eliminate these liabilities to intelligent adaptation? But when one realizes, as Darwin did, the primary adaptive importance of man's social qualities for human survival, and then sees how useful to social solidarity would be an unquestioning authoritarian conscience frozen into a man's personality, incapable of rational control, and embodying the social duties of his cultural pattern, the mystery is dissolved. The authoritarian conscience represents the dynamics of social survival implanted in the very personality structure of a member of society. Once this is well installed in the repressed area of the mind where it can control a man's actions by guilt and remorse if it is violated, but where voluntary control cannot get at it, then the man is socially completely

reliable. As Darwin says, then often at the call of conscience a man "without a moment's hesitation [will] risk his life for that of a fellow creature." A society composed of men of rigid conscience is one in which each man can rely on the other to do his duty.

A dogmatic religion can perform a similar function and is closely allied with an authoritarian conscience. Darwin recognizes its capacity for social solidarity, but perhaps not enough. His remarks about the social function of religion in strengthening solidarity are very brief. But there is clearly a parallelism between the function of an authoritarian conscience within a personality and that of a dogmatic religion within a cultural pattern. When the two reinforce the same social demands, as they tend to do in a stable relatively unchanging society, they also reinforce one another. Both are alike in not countenancing criticism. Their demands are absolute, final, and not open to question. They come from sources beyond rational control or examination. Their ethical justification is accordingly on the same level. They are justified so long as, but only so long as, they are serviceable for the survival of their group. When they exhibit a cultural lag, however, and become unadapted to their environmental conditions, they become a hazard and may become a principal contributing factor to the selective elimination of their culture.

Another important ethical function of natural selection is that of determining the range of moral responsibility of any man—that is to say, the limits of social responsibility required for human social survival. These limits are clearly those of the society which is protecting the individual by its cultural pattern. The dynamics of natural selection as it applies to human groups extends only to the limits of the group. It definitely sanctions the distinction of in-group and out-group. It works only for the survival of a society, for those united within a single set of functional institutions, a single cultural pattern, an in-group. The out-group is a part of the society's environment which must be adjusted to, coped with, in whatever way proves most effec-

tive for the security of the in-group. Insofar as the cultural consolidating actions of a society do not reach beyond its members, there is no social responsibility toward men or animals outside the boundaries of that society. The boundaries of a man's society become the boundaries of his sphere of obligation.

Darwin points this fact out emphatically, and consistently with the evidences for an evolutionary ethics. He ends his extended discussion with this exceedingly pregnant sentence: "We have now seen that actions are regarded by savages, and were probably so regarded by primeval man, as good or bad, solely as they obviously affect the welfare of the tribe—not that of the species, nor that of an individual member of the tribe." [5]

The last phrase is the one to notice. Whatever corrections of detail subsequent studies in anthropology and biology may make, this phrase accounts for the incisive impact of evolutionary theory on ethical conclusions. The survival principle, as it operates on social animal species, works for the survival of the groups within the species. It does not operate on the individual, for the individual is shielded by his incorporation in the group. It does not operate on the species, for the species being a social species is comprised of societies. It operates on the group. For man, it operates on the cultural pattern which holds men within a group. And so the survival principle sanctions human customs as good or bad solely as they affect the welfare or security of the group—"not that of the species, nor that of the individual" within the group. For the survival of the species among social species depends upon the survival of the groups.

So Darwin's evolutionary theory seems to make full circle and confirm the central concepts of the cultural relativity theory —the stress on the ethical force of a cultural pattern, the diversity and autonomy of these cultural patterns, and the limits of moral responsibility beyond the in-group. It does this, but there is a profound difference. Every cultural pattern is subject to

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 489.

the over-arching criterion of its adaptability to its environment, of its survival value. And under this criterion a world society sanctioning the brotherhood of man could well become under advanced civilized conditions, the most highly adapted human form of social existence.

Darwin envisages this too. He writes:

> As man advances in civilization, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him. This point being once reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races.[6]

He envisages a final inclusion of all men within the bounds of moral responsibility. But his argument here is a weak one in terms of natural selection. The appeal in this passage is to rational consistency, to simple reason. Natural selection has never exhibited much respect for rational consistency in the event of failure of adaptation. As long as intelligence and reason serve toward adaptation, they will be favored by natural selection, and they have served man well in this respect. But they have served man toward survival always in the concrete instance, always for a specific problem of adaptation, never in the abstract as in Darwin's argument. Actually in the abstract, out of pure consistency, the argument would have applied to man in the first federation of primitive tribes, for whom "in simplest reason" "there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to all nations and races." Darwin temporarily forgets that these "artificial barriers" are the cultural patterns which consolidate men for survival as social animals, and within which alone man has found his security.

Darwin senses that something is wrong with this argument and impelled by his usual intellectual honesty, brings up some counter instances. "If men are separated . . . by great differ-

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 491–492.

ences in appearance or habits, experience unfortunately shews us how long it is, before we look at them as our fellow-creatures. . . . The very idea of humanity, as far as I could observe, was new to most of the Gauchos of the Pampas." [7] Darwin then, to counteract this evidence, suggests that the humanitarian ideal could be inculcated "through instruction and example to the young [till] it becomes eventually incorporated in public opinion." But again his argument carries no weight for an evolutionary ethics. An appeal to acculturation is stronger admittedly than his earlier appeal to "simplest reason." But he has reversed the causal sequence. According to Darwin's own evolutionary principles, it is not an inculcated belief in the brotherhood of man that can sanction an extension of the sphere of moral responsibility to include all men. The belief might be unrealistic and unadapted to social conditions at the time. What would sanction the doctrine of the brotherhood of man would be social conditions which would make a world society the best adapted of human forms of living. And this is possible in evolutionary terms.

It seems clear to me that Darwin was groping for some such conclusion. He felt it was high time for an acceptance of the doctrine of universal human responsibility. He sensed that this acceptance had a relation to the expansion of civilized societies into larger and larger nations. He had plenty of evidence that the citizen versus barbarian, in-group versus out-group, conception was a prevalent and biologically justifiable conception. But he failed to make the transition, consistent with his principles, to the development of an actual world society adapted to modern conditions sanctioning by its institutions the universal moral responsibility of all men to all men. Such tentative institutions as the world now has in the United Nations and the World Court perhaps do offer a shadowy realization of this ideal. And definitely there is widespread feeling among men that the social conditions are such as to make a world society appropriate—

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 492.

and possibly the only instrument that can guarantee the continued survival of the human species.

Concluding Summary and Criticism

The foregoing I find to be the substance of Darwin's evolutionary theory of ethics. I have stated it in what I think is its strongest form, and in this form it impresses me as a tenable theory and one which no later thinkers have much improved upon. However, some men have given such very different interpretations of Darwin's ethical conclusions that possibly my interpretation will be thought unwarranted from his text. If so, at least I stand by this interpretation as a version of evolutionary ethics empirically very well based, quite as well as any of the theories already discussed. And the main insights pointed out are all to be found in Darwin's text.

The selective system for this theory is natural selection. Its basic criterion is adaptation or adaptability, which for human ethical values applies directly to the cultural pattern of human societies. A cultural pattern is ethically evaluated as better or worse in proportion to its adaptability or survival value. The conduct of individuals within a society is good in proportion as it either conforms to the social pattern or reforms the social pattern to be more adaptable to prevailing conditions for the survival of the group. The latter sort of conduct is the better if the social group is under pressure and in need of greater adaptation.

Since social integration is the usual instrument for maximizing social efficiency and power, this becomes a secondary ethical criterion in evolutionary ethics. For the more efficient and powerful a social organization, the more adapted, in general, it is to meet hostile attack or other environmental pressures—in short, the greater its survival value. Thus the criterion of integration central to the ethics of self-realization becomes a secondary criterion in evolutionary ethics. Or put the matter the other

way round, the criterion of social integration which was hard pressed in the self-realization theory to justify itself and the need for discipline against the demands for individual happiness, now finds its effective justification in the dynamics of natural selection which demands a social pattern with survival value. In this manner these two strong empirical theories of ethics complement each other with a very large mass of systematized evidence behind them.

Against so formidable an empirical front, is there any store of evidence that could disturb the firmness of these two theories in combination? There is. It comes from the still unrepressed dynamics of individual impulse demanding human happiness and as much individual freedom of decision as possible. And in the sphere of political organization individual impulse calls for the individualistic structure of an open democratic society in opposition to the centralized structure of an integrated functional society.

Examined closely and in relation to the succession of empirical theories we have discussed, it appears that this opposition comes from the only other independent source of vital energy besides that of the vital energy of an interbreeding population. The opposition is that of the energy of individual human impulse demanding freedom for satisfaction and for happiness, against the energy for biological propagation and the survival of the species demanding a secure and efficient society to meet human emergency.

There is no question about the actuality of this opposition of vital energies, or of the competing political ideals they precipitate. Every man carries this opposition in his breast, for he is both an individual with impulses pressing for gratification and a living organism with a biological inheritance demanding that he live and propagate his kind.

There is a way in which this opposition can be resolved, at least understandably and after a manner. This will be the subject of the final chapter of this book.

There are, however, a number of types of nonempirical the-

ories of ethics that must be examined first. They may also have important contributions to offer toward our final attempt at a resolution of the differences among the various typical schools of ethics. To these nonempirical theories we turn in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 11

INTUITIVE AND FORMAL THEORIES

Types of Non-Empirical Theories

UP TO THIS POINT we have been concerned only with empirical ethical theories. They have all been theories which sought to discover the criteria for good and bad conduct through observing men's voluntary actions. By descriptive analysis and inductive methods, they sought to lift ethical criteria out of these data.

As we have seen, none of these empirical theories has proved entirely adequate or free from rather serious difficulties. It was inevitable that some other way of deriving ethical criteria should be sought. Perhaps the trouble with the empirical theories lay in the empirical method itself. Perhaps judgments of value are not amenable to scientific treatment, nor the criteria for determining better and worse choices. A number of other methods have been suggested, and these will occupy our attention in this and the following chapter.

One such type of method, however, we shall not take up in detail. This is the appeal to supernatural revelation or to other supposedly infallible authority. The difficulty with this appeal is that of determining which of a variety of conflicting infallible authorities is the genuine one. If the Bible is chosen, why not

equally the Koran, or the texts of the Brahmins? Moreover, the Bible conflicts with itself. And if rational criticism is enlisted to interpret what passages may be taken literally and what allegorically, then the appeal to infallibility is abandoned. In its place enters empirical scholarship. In short, the appeal to infallible authority is self-destructive because such authorities conflict with one another, and there is no infallible criterion for determining which of two contrary infallible pronouncements can be discarded.

We shall find later that this same sort of weakness infects a number of other kinds of appeal. But the weakness is particularly glaring in the claim of infallibility.

Setting this mode of appeal to one side, we find two main types of non-empirical ethical theories—the type which seeks the sanction for ethical judgments in immediate intuition, or in some form of *a priori,* and that which regards the linguistic character of ethical judgments such that appeal to sanctioning of any kind whether empirical, intuitive, or a priori is inappropriate. The first of these two types, generally known as the intuitive and the formal theories, will occupy our attention in this chapter. The linguistic theories will be taken up in the chapter following.

I am grouping the intuitive and formal theories together because they are alike in making their appeal to certainty as the ultimate basis for sanctioning ethical criteria. This is, it should be noticed, a cognitive sanction. For the empirical theories of the previous chapters, the sanction was always ultimately a dynamic one. For cultural relativism it was the dynamics of social conformity; for hedonism it was the drives for purposive achievement and the maximizing of pleasure; for pragmatic ethics it was the configuration of tensions in a problematic social situation; for self-realization it was the integrative action of a personality and of a cultural pattern of institutions; and for evolutionary ethics it was the dynamics of the evolutionary process in the selective survival of an interbreeding population. In all these empirical theories, the search is for well-evidenced

hypotheses about ethical criteria that are *dynamically* sanctioned. But in the group of theories we are coming to in this chapter, the search is for ethical criteria that are *cogitively* sanctioned with the seal of certainty.

The various theories in this group differ among themselves as to just whence they derive their certainties. The variety of proposals is very great indeed. The best we can do is to exhibit a number of typical proposals and show how they were defended by influential proponents of them. I am choosing the proposals of Henry Sidgwick, Joseph Butler, Immanuel Kant, and G. E. Moore for this purpose. I choose Sidgwick to represent the appeal to the self-evidence of general ethical principles; Butler to represent the appeal to a moral sense (or conscience) whose deliverances are regarded as final and certain in matters of right and wrong; Kant to exhibit the appeal to ethical certainty in its purest and most rarefied a priori form as a matter of plain logical consistency or non-contradiction; Moore to represent a relatively recent and novel mode of appealing to certainty by way of an intellectual intuition of a simple and unanalyzable pure ethical property such as the character *good* or *right*.

There are sub-varieties of each of these varieties of appeals to cognitive sanctioning. Certainty has many aspects. Like a chameleon it takes the color of what it rests upon. Its one common quality, in the context of this chapter, is its incorrigibility, its absolute determination of the cognitive truth or factuality of what it is attached to. We shall see this character exhibited in the cognitive sanctions employed by all the men named above.

Self-evidence of Moral Principles (Sidgwick)

Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics* is widely regarded as one of the most careful analytical studies of the basis for ethical judgments yet produced. His final espousal of an intuitive mode of sanctioning ethical criteria is, consequently, something not to be taken lightly.

Early in his book Sidgwick makes a distinction between "perceptual" and "philosophical" intuitionism which has proved very helpful. He points out that "Intuitional moralists have not always taken sufficient care . . . to make clear whether they regard as ultimately valid, moral judgments on single acts, or general rules prescribing particular kinds of acts, or more universal and fundamental principles." [1] Intuitive moral judgments on single acts would be perceptual intuitionism. The term may even be spread to cover general rules prescribing particular acts. The distinguishing thing is the intuition of the rightness or wrongness *of a particular act.*

This is the usual common-sense way of conceiving an intuitive ethical judgment. I look out a window and see a friend backing out his car, ripping the fender of the car beside his own, and going off. I can easily take the number of the damaged car and report to its owner the man who did the damage. According to the perceptual intuition theory, there should be available an immediate indubitable deliverance as to what in the circumstances would be the right thing for me to do. According to philosophical intuitionism, however, an ethical judgment in such a situation could not be so immediately reached. What is sanctioned by intuition are only general ethical principles found on reflection to be self-evident. The situation itself would have to be analyzed to see whether one of these principles applied to it, and only then could a moral judgment be made. Sidgwick is a philosophical intuitionist.

He lists four conditions "by which self-evident truths are distinguished from mere opinions." For custom, he points out, may easily lead us to think that maxims are self-evident which appear so only through familiarity and habit and the common beliefs of one's associates. Sidgwick's four conditions are:

1. "The terms of the proposition must be clear and precise."
2. "The self-evidence of the proposition must be ascertained by careful reflection."

[1] Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (London, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1922), p. 103.

3. "The propositions accepted as self-evident must be mutually consistent."

4. The proposition must have "universal" or "general" consent. For "since it is implied in the very notion of Truth that it is essentially the same for all minds, the denial by another of a proposition that I have affirmed has a tendency to impair my confidence in its validity." [2]

After an examination of the important ethical theories up to his time, he comes out in favor of utilitarianism. Nevertheless, he holds that the theory can be justified only if its basic principles can be accepted as self-evident. He thereby becomes the most prominent exponent of the theory known as Ethical Hedonism in contrast to Psychological Hedonism. In this role we referred to him in Chapter 6, pages 136–137.

In his view the basic principles of utilitarianism—namely prudence, social justice, and rational benevolence (essentially the Greatest Happiness Principle)—are self-evident. By this cognitive means he bridges the gap between individual and social hedonism. The sanction is a form of cognitive certainty. The dynamics of human desires and the pursuit of happiness are secondary and are sanctioned only by way of the self-evidence of the basic utilitarian principles. We shall now follow his argument through step by step to see if he comes out with a tenable solution.

Sidgwick's careful statement of these three basic self-evident principles was given in Chapter 6 to exemplify the organization of Ethical Hedonism. There is no need of repeating them here, for our interest in this section is not primarily in the content of these principles but in the method of sanctioning and so justifying them. His formulations do, however, seem to fulfill Sidgwick's first condition for the self-evident truth of a proposition: The terms of the propositions are "clear and precise."

The substance of his self-evident Principle of Prudence is that a present good counts for the agent no more toward the value of an act than a future good that can be predicted. In

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

other words, one ought to aim at "one's own good on the whole." The substance of his Principle of Justice is that "whatever action any of us judges to be right for himself, he implicitly judges to be right for all similar persons in similar circumstances." The substance of his Principle of Rational Benevolence is that we should aim for the greatest good for all. "As a rational being," he writes, "I am bound to aim at good generally." [3]

It is pertinent to note that Sidgwick propounds these principles abstractly as applying to *good* whatever *good* might be. It might be pleasure, an object of desire, success of achievement, an act of self-realization, adaptation. It could be almost anything conceivable as good. I think Sidgwick intended it to include anything that can be conceived as good. But there is a restriction upon possible candidates for the role, and this is laid down in the principle of prudence. It must be possible for whatever is good to be conceived as good for the agent himself. It would seem to me that this would exclude socially centered ethical theories such as cultural relativism and the social situation theory—theories noticeably that do not have a problem of bridging a gap from an individual to a social good. It would probably not even apply to an evolutionary ethical theory developed in the manner of Darwin and Simpson with an emphasis on social survival.

Right at the start, then, we find that several of the big schools of ethical theory we have been examining would not find all of Sidgwick's principles acceptable. He cannot appeal, then, to consensus of ethical opinion among the schools. What then does he appeal to for the establishment of the self-evidence of his principles? How does he argue for self-evidence?

Incidentally there is something paradoxical in the very idea of having to argue for self-evidence. If a principle is self-evident, then its truth, one would think, would shine out from it as obviously to the intellect as the brilliance of the sun to the eye. If its truth does not so shine forth, how can it be presented as self-evident? The theorist has to say that somehow some per-

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

sons do not see it, or only obscurely, and the purpose of arguing for a self-evident principle is not to demonstrate its self-evidence, which would be absurd, but to get a person who does not see it clearly into a position "through careful reflection" where its self-evidence will show itself forth. How then does Sidgwick induce the "careful reflection," which is his second condition for establishing self-evidence, so as to show forth the self-evidence of his principles?

First, he comes to the search for such principles against the background of his very thorough study of earlier theories where he finds none among the empirical theories free from difficulties, and he finds some of the most reputable theories just plain circular in their reasoning, assuming somewhere along the line of their argument the ethical principle they come out with in the end. So, in a sort of intellectual despair he begins his argument with these words:

> Can we then, between this Scylla and Carybdis of ethical inquiry, avoiding on the one hand doctrines that merely bring us back to common opinion with all its imperfections, and on the other hand doctrines that lead round in a circle, find any way of obtaining self-evident moral principles of real significance? It would be disheartening to have to regard as altogether illusory the strong instinct of Common Sense that points to the existence of such principles, and the deliberate convictions of a long line of moralists who have enunciated them.[4]

He then acknowledges the data of cultural relativism—the fact that there are many moral codes so that it would be impossible rationally to set up any one code as the principles of morality "significantly" authoritative in the manner sought. However, between the alternative of total skepticism about morals and the relativity of detailed codes, he finds promise in seeking universally acceptable general principles. In his words:

> We shall find, I think, that the truth lies between these two conclusions. There are certain absolute practical principles, the truth of

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

which, when they are explicitly stated, is manifest; but they are of too abstract a nature, and too universal in their scope, to enable us to ascertain by immediate application of them what we ought to do in any particular case; particular duties have still to be determined by some other method.[5]

So, this is Sidgwick's suggestion for escaping from the difficulties besetting traditional ethical theories. Can't he possibly find some ethical principles so abstract that they will apply to conduct no matter what the particular cultural code—principles universal in their scope as regards all men? There is a strong demand, he believes, for something like this in the "instinct of Common Sense" and also in "the deliberate convictions of a long line of moralists."

He then refers to the Principle of Justice, which he points out has "been most widely recognized" though not in the "most abstract and universal form" nor (as, for instance, in the Golden Rule) in the most precise form. Here follows the careful and precise enunciation of the principle quoted earlier in Chapter 6, page 136, after which he writes, "Common Sense has amply recognized the practical importance of the maxim: and its truth, so far as it goes, appears to me self-evident." [6]

So far he has said only that the "instinct" of Common Sense and "the deliberate convictions of the long line of moralists" call for some secure moral principles. His phrase is "points to the existence of such principles," but such pointing would hardly establish their existence. Then he carefully adds "Common sense has amply recognized the importance of the maxim," still not committing Common Sense to establishing the self-evidence or even testifying to it. And then the first explicit testimony: "Its truth, so far as it goes, appears to me self-evident." Actually, so far, all we have explicitly to support Sidgwick's position is his personal testimony that his Principle of Justice "appears" self-evident to him. It is clear in the succeeding para-

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 379.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

graphs that the other two principles would appear to him self-evident too.

Then comes a careful formulation of his Principle of Benevolence, followed by this sentence: "I think that a 'plain man' in modern civilized society, if his conscience were fairly brought to consider the hypothetical question whether it would be morally right for him to seek his own happiness on any occasion if it involved a certain sacrifice of the greater happiness of some other human being—without any counterbalancing gain to any one else—would answer unhesitatingly in the negative." [7]

This seems, at first reading, rather impressive. But actually Sidgwick has carefully qualified it. And one should recall here Darwin's remark about the Gaucho of the Pampas who had never heard of humanity. The "plain man" here referred to comes from "modern civilized society," which is perhaps not much larger than England, and he makes his report from his acculturated conscience only after he has been "fairly brought to consider the question." This suggested sanction would hardly necessitate self-evidence, nor anything more than the selective guidance of a cultural pattern according to the ethics of cultural relativism. At the most it would be an appeal to the intuitive dictate of conscience, but Sidgick is not arguing for a conscience theory of ethics; he is proposing a theory of self-evident principles.

After the foregoing passage, nevertheless, Sidgwick proceeds to the following statement: "I have tried to show how in the principles of Justice, Prudence, and Rational Benevolence as commonly recognised there is at least a self-evident element immediately cognisable by abstract intuition; depending in each case on the relation which individuals and their particular ends bear as parts to their wholes, and to other parts of these wholes." Sidgwick then admits that these principles of Justice, Prudence, and Rational Benevolence do get mixed up in men's minds with other seemingly obvious moral maxims that are sanctioned only by custom and acculturation.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

No doubt these principles are often placed side by side with other precepts to which custom and general consent have given a merely illusory air of self-evidence: but the distinction between the two kinds of maxims appears to me to become manifest by merely reflecting upon them. I know by direct reflection that the propositions "I ought to speak the truth," "I ought to keep my promises" —however true they may be—are not self-evident to me; they present themselves as propositions requiring rational justification of some kind. On the other hand, the propositions, "I ought not to prefer a present lesser good to a future greater good," and "I ought not to prefer my own lesser good to the greater good of another" do present themselves as self-evident; as much (e.g.) as the mathematical axiom that "if equals be added to equals the wholes are equal." [8]

These statements are, so far as I can make out, the culmination of Sidgwick's argument for the self-evidence of his principles. The argument comes out with only two points: (1) that these principles do present themselves as self-evident, and (2) that in this respect they resemble mathematical axioms. The second point is one commonly employed by intuitionists seeking to establish the self-evidence of moral principles. It enlisted the authority of mathematics, particularly geometry with a tradition reaching back to Euclid, for the legitimacy of self-evidence as a cognitive sanction for the truth of certain basic propositions. But it was not very long after Sidgwick wrote, that self-consistent geometries alternative to Euclid's were developed. These geometries had axioms inconsistent with Euclid's. But contrary axioms could not both be self-evidently true propositions. Accordingly, mathematicians gave up the notion that geometrical or any other mathematical axioms were true, and took the position that they are merely postulates for deductive systems with no truth reference as propositions implied at all. So, the argument from analogy with the methods of mathematics no longer has any persuasive force as an intuitionist argument to establish a cognitive sanction of certainty for ethical principles.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 382–383.

Sidgwick's appeal, then, rests solely on the plea that these principles "present themselves as self-evident." This is the strongest statement he makes. Up to this sentence, he merely states that their truth appears to *him* self-evident, and that a plain man in modern civilized society could be expected, "if his conscience were fairly brought to consider the matter," to make the same response and find these principles presumably self-evident too.

So the positive evidence (if I may use this term in perplexity as to what other term I could use) for the self-evidence of these principles sums up to the following: (1) To Sidgwick himself they appear self-evident; (2) To a certain group of highly acculturated men they would, to the best of Sidgwick's belief, also appear self-evident; (3) They "do present themselves as self-evident" as much as a mathematical axiom.

Now, the last item of evidence is no longer available to an intuitionist since axioms have become postulates, and it actually turns into an item of counter evidence. The first and second items are so narrow in range as to suggest that they are more reasonably explainable in terms of acculturation or even some peculiar special conditioning; Sidgwick admits that these principles "are often placed side by side with other precepts to which custom and general consent have given a merely illusory air of self-evidence." To any critics of Sidgwick to whom these principles do not appear self-evident, acculturation appears to be a fully satisfactory explanation.

Sidgwick seeks promptly to block off this counterhypothesis in this way: He distinguishes once more between maxims that only appear self-evident through custom and those which are "genuine ethical axioms" and states that while the former are psychologically explainable, the latter presumably are not, for they never have been. "No psychogonical theory has ever been put forward professing to discredit the propositions that I regard as really axiomatic, by showing that the causes which produced them were such as had a tendency to make them false: while as regards the former class of maxims, a psychogonical

proof that they are untrustworthy when taken as absolutely and without qualification true is, in my view, superfluous: since direct reflection shows me that they have no claim to be so taken." [9]

Though Sidgwick's reply to the acculturation hypothesis is prompt, it does not seem on reflection to offer very effective counterevidence. The Principle of Prudence is easily explainable psychologically by the dynamics of conative-affective behavior and requires no a priori support through self-evidence. The Principles of Justice and Rational Benevolence given world-wide scope to include all men and perhaps all sentient beings have often been denied, uniformly so by cultural relativists and evolutionists of Darwin's type. We have, in fact, for another purpose, quoted Darwin's "psychological" explanation of the limited scope of moral responsibility in the ethical codes of probably all societies previous to the great civilizations of very recent times. Sidgwick's defense on this score then breaks down.

What more has he to say? He takes some comfort in the confirmation of his views by a number of prominent and careful moral theorists. His guarded wording is characteristic of the man: "I should, however, rely less confidently on the conclusions set forth in the preceding section, if they did not appear to me to be in substantial agreement—in spite of superficial difference—with the doctrines of those moralists who have been most in earnest in seeking among commonly received moral rules for genuine intuitions of the Practical Reason." [10] He refers specifically to Clarke and Kant. The chapter ends with an acknowledgment that his self-evident principles amount to a support of utilitarianism and a criticism of Mill's theory to show that Mill failed to establish his theory by purely empirical methods, whence an indication of the need of Sidgwick's a priori sanctioning.

This is the end of the argument. The rest of the book is oc-

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 383.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 384.

cupied with showing the appropriateness of identifying good with pleasure, and thus with Sidgwick's support of an ethical hedonism.

If we check Sidgwick's argument against his own conditions for establishing self-evidence, he does not come off very well. The first condition that the propositions be "clear and precise" he satisfies. The second, that the self-evidence of the propositions be "ascertained by careful reflection" is satisfied as to Sidgwick's own reflection and that of a number of other persons and possibly groups of persons to whom he refers, but extends no further. The third condition that the propositions be mutually consistent may possibly not be fulfilled if the Principle of Prudence is not subordinated to the Principle of Rational Benevolence. For if the Principle of Prudence is given universal scope then it would appear to sanction, on a basis of self-evidence, an individual hedonism. This conclusion would conflict with the social hedonism demanded by the self-evidence of the Principle of Rational Benevolence. But we might overlook this possible difficulty since it appeared self-evident to Sidgwick that the larger whole of goods represented by social hedonism would legislate over the lesser whole represented by mere prudence and individual hedonism. The great failure is in the satisfaction of a fourth condition, that a self-evident proposition should have "universal" or "general" consent—though subject to the first three conditions, of course.

Sidgwick has not even come close to satisfying this fourth requirement. Not only can responsible authorities be found who question the self-evidence of all three of his principles, but highly probable empirical hypotheses are available to explain such general agreement as we do find. The Principle of Prudence is well sanctioned by the dynamics of the learning process as explained in the theory of individual hedonism. The Social Justice and Rational Benevolence Principles are sanctioned for a limited scope by almost any cultural pattern and for world-wide scope in modern times by the pressures of the reality of the contemporary world situation. The dynamics of acculturа-

tion easily explains most of such qualified agreement on these principles as we actually do find, and the dynamics of other empirical factors would seem ample to explain the rest.

True, Sidgwick is not under obligation, for the fulfillment of his conditions of self-evidence, to get everybody to agree—but only those men of intellectual integrity who have reflectively set their minds on the problem. But unless Sidgwick defined this group of men as precisely those who agreed on the self-evidence of these principles, it is easy to find many responsible moralists and laymen who would not endorse his pronouncement. The grounds for the self-evidence of these principles thus resolves itself precisely into a pronouncement by Sidgwick and his like-minded group. There is no appeal available elsewhere to adjust the difference of judgment with other responsible men—not to a higher level of self-evidence for there can be no degrees of self-evidence and not to empirical evidence because such appeal is by definition superfluous when self-evidence is claimed. The claim becomes an *ipse dixit,* "for he himself hath said it."

An exponent for self-evidence can then resort to calling names, or even to harsher methods, as Clarke does in a much quoted passage: "These things are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extremest stupidity of mind, corruptness of manners, or perverseness of spirit can possibly make any man entertain the least doubt concerning them." [11]

So the appeal to self-evidence, persisted in, eventuates in dogmatism. Sidgwick is too urbane and tolerant ever to vituperate, but the conclusion of his analysis is after all politely to indicate to his reader that he must accept these self-evident principles or run the grave risk of having no moral principles at all.

Yet, all in all, what added weight of justification does the claim of self-evidence give to these central utilitarian principles, which they lacked before? Only an elaborate assertion of cer-

[11] Samuel Clarke, "Discourse upon Natural Religion," quoted from Benjamin Rand, *The Classical Moralists* (Cambridge, Riverside Press, 1909), p. 312.

tainty, which is supposed to stop all questioning, and which an astute critic will question anyway—and all the quicker, in fact, if he has followed the facts of this cognitive appeal down through the history of thought. If somebody presents a proposition as self-evident, many men of today will immediately conclude that the proposition is quite surely lacking in evidence. The solid evidence for hedonism and utilitarianism, so far as it goes, remains that outlined in Chapters 5 and 6—the observed *dynamics* of purposive behavior in man.

But we must see whether other modes of appeal to certainty cannot do better.

The Deliverances of a Moral Sense or Conscience (Butler)

There are many moral sense theories. Butler's is one of the most carefully thought out. For him conscience is the crowning organizing principle of a personality. He is thus essentially a self-realizationist who is convinced of the unquestionable integrative authority of conscience in the human personality. His analysis of personality structure was remarkable for the time at which he wrote his ethical sermons.

Our concern with him, however, is primarily in his conception of the incorrigible authority of conscience for the rightness or wrongness of an act. As a divine, he also thought of conscience as a gift of God and so as the voice of God speaking through a man's person. This gave the deliverances of conscience a still greater aura of authority and moral certainty. But the theological basis is not germane to our present problem which is to inquire how far Butler was successful in finding the original element of certainty in the voice of conscience itself.

Butler shows a full awareness of the key concept of the integrative structure of human personality early in the Preface to his *Fifteen Sermons on Human Nature*. "Every work, both of art and nature," he writes, "is a system." When a watch is taken to pieces, he points out, it no longer acts as a watch. A watch

is the system of these pieces each performing its proper function in connection with the others. Then he adds:

> Thus it is with regard to the inward frame of man. Appetites, passions, affections, and the principle of reflection, considered merely as the several parts of our inward nature, do not at all give us an idea of the system or constitution of this nature: because the constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into consideration, namely, by the relations which these several parts have to each other; the chief of which is the authority of reflection or conscience. It is from considering the relations which the several appetites and passions in the inward frame have to each other, and, above all, the supremacy of reflection or conscience, that we get the idea of the system or constitution of human nature. And from the idea itself it will fully appear that this, our nature, i.e., constitution, is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears, that its nature, i.e., constitution or system, is adapted to measure time.[12]

Butler developed an original theory of personality structure, quite different from Plato's and different also from that we outlined in Chapter 8 on the basis of the psychological evidences now available. He distinguished four dynamic factors within the human personality:

1. He notes the appetites, passions, and so on, referred to in the quoted passage above. These correspond very closely with our purposive drives and consummatory satisfactions described earlier in Chapter 2.

2. He describes a Principle of Self-love. This comes very close to the dynamic action of prudence which was developed in Chapter 5 on individual hedonism. He seems to conceive of it as a calculating principle which in cool reflection reckons up the expectation of satisfaction over dissatisfaction in a situation and aims toward the maximization of pleasure for the individual and the minimization of pain. It is a principle of intelligent self-interest. It is contrasted with the impulsive self-interest of

[12] Joseph Butler, *The Works of Joseph Butler, D.C.L.*, Vol. II, *Fifteen Sermons on Human Nature* (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 8–10.

an appetite which may not be prudent. In our treatment of prudence we followed the trend of modern theory which holds that the corrective dynamics for prudent behavior all comes from the resultant effects of the drives themselves adjusting to one another's demands in a given situation. Butler, however, lifts self-love into an independent force with its own dynamic power to control the passions and produce a prudent action.

3. He describes a Principle of Benevolence, similar to the Principle of Self-love, but directed toward the maximization of happiness for others. This also is a calculating principle and is such as would justify the demands of social hedonism, and it also has a power of its own to institute control. It can control the passions, and if there is a conflict between benevolence and self-love, it would appear from the general tenor of Butler's writing that benevolence would have precedence over self-love. But actually he believes that genuine conflicts between these two principles would be unusual, and possibly only apparent and due to miscalculations.

4. The last is conscience which has precedence over all the other functions of the personality. It also is a reflective principle, and it is a dynamic principle with authority. Since Butler is emphatic in regarding conscience as a reflective rational principle, it would first seem that he is identifying it not with the rigid authoritarian conscience possessing elements that are beyond voluntary control, but rather with the rational, humane conscience. Yet one cannot actually make this identification, because of the property of incorrigible certainty which Butler attributes to ultimate conclusions of conscience. It is Butler's attribution of this property that brings his theory within the scope of the present chapter.

This is the feature of Butler's theory which we shall now concentrate upon. The other two reflective principles are interesting, particularly as suggested means for harmonizing a self-realization theory with individual and social hedonism. But consideration of them would lead us off on a tangent. Besides, as independent dynamic factors in personality structures, there is

no reliable evidence for them. And they do not enter into the moral issue over cognitive sanctioning by intuition or an a priori, since Butler does not regard them as infallible.

The first thing to observe about the authority of conscience is that, supreme as it is, it may be violated and so is not dynamically inviolable. In other words, the ultimate moral sanction for an act which is the prerogative of conscience is not a dynamic but a cognitive sanction. Butler brings up the illustration of an appetite demanding satisfaction which "reflection or conscience . . . disapproves. . . . In these circumstances, . . . which is to be obeyed, appetite or reflection? Cannot this question be answered," he asks, "from the economy and constitution of human nature merely, without saying which is the strongest? . . . All this is no more than the distinction which every body is acquainted with, between *mere power* and *authority*." So, definitely the incorrigible moral sanction of conscience is not a dynamic one, but one owing to some other source. Butler goes on and says, "Had it strength as it had right; had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world." [13]

Our central question then is, where this "manifest authority" comes from. A less careful thinker than Butler might have said from "the immediate induitable feeling of the certainty of truth accompanying the deliverances of conscience." There is no question this feeling is experienced by most people who have a strong conscience whenever conscience speaks. The empiricist explains it in terms of acculturation and possibly also the effects of repression. What is firmly established by custom and tradition and deeply embedded in the personality acquires a feeling of certainty as to its rightness. But this feeling of certainty is not a supreme moral sanction. It is only a symptom of the strength of custom. Moreover, the deliverances of conscience conflict from one culture to another, and even within a single complex culture. So, the feeling of certainty is not of itself a reliable moral sanction.

Butler does not appeal to such a feeling. Conscience is, in his

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.

view, a reflective faculty. But more than that, it is a faculty implicated in the intrinsic harmony and fitness of human nature. A man who consults his conscience in cool reflection will perceive with the certainty of intellectual clarity the fitness of an action to human nature and to the occasion which calls it forth. The ultimate moral sanction for Butler is not an impulsive feeling of certainty but an intellectual certainty based on cool reflection.

To obtain the spirit of Butler's theory, I shall now give some of the critical passages in which he deals with the moral sanction. One important point to notice through these quotations is that in establishing the moral rightness of an act, no reference is ever made to its *consequences*. The reference is always to the act *"in itself,"* and its obvious fitness, after due reflection, to be performed.

His first point is that conscience exists in fact as a constituent of human nature. The following passage makes this point and tells what it is that conscience does:

> There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, and good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly: and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.[14]

The last clause of this quotation is a reference to a transcendent theological sanction which dynamically sees to it that in the hereafter, if not sooner, the sinner who fails to follow the judgments of his conscience will be punished. There is here, to be sure, a reference to supernatural consequences. Also, a person with theological beliefs similar to Butler's will have the assur-

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

ance that the voice of conscience is identical with the voice of God, and thus theologically as well as cognitively it has the sanction of ultimate truth. But Butler does not rest his case here on a theological background. The sentence which follows the quotation above reads: "But this (theological) part of the office of conscience is beyond my present design explicitly to consider." He seems to me here explicitly to be saying that he believes the moral sanction of conscience can stand on its own feet without further support of a theological sanction, and thus he proposes to present his view. Only on this assumption, of course, could he have acquired the place he has in the history of ethics as an outstanding exponent of an ethical theory based on the sanction of conscience, rather than on a theological sanction.

The passage quoted refers to conscience as a "principle of reflection," not a mere dynamic impulse among other impulses. Yet it has some dynamic strength for it "exerts itself" and has to be "*forcibly stopped.*" In fact, it probably has a good deal of dynamic strength. Yet it may be "stopped" or violated. A man may act against his conscience. Nevertheless, it is a "*superior* principle" in its moral authority even if not in its power to command exceptionless obedience. Lastly, it "pronounces determinately" regarding "actions to be *in themselves* just, right, good" or "evil, wrong, unjust." In terms of the distinction between philosophical and perceptual intuitionism made by Sidgwick, Butler here shows himself to be a *perceptual intuitionist.*

The passage quoted, of course, does not prove anything. It simply describes something which Butler obviously finds in himself and believes exists in every man. That such a conscience exists not only in Butler but in many men can safely be admitted. It may be doubted whether it exists in all men, and whether it possesses the moral authority Butler ascribes to it even if it does exist in all men. These propositions are what need to be demonstrated.

Barring theological references and references to the Scriptures, Butler offers the following arguments:

1. There is an argument from the very meaning of the term *conscience*. "As being superior; as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others; insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea." [15] But there is no moral sanction in the meaning of a term. Nor is the meaning of a term any ground for belief in the existence or authority of what the term refers to. The meaning of the term *dragon* is no ground for belief in the creature's existence or its fury.

2. There is an argument from the testimony of the man-in-the-street, now mostly known as "the ordinary man." Butler states

> Let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt, but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by any fair man in almost any circumstance. Neither do there appear any cases which look like exceptions to this; but those of superstition, and of partiality to ourselves.[16]

This does not get us very far either. The statement rests after all only on Butler's own conviction; he does "not in the least doubt." Even if the statement were true, it would be only an argument from some degree of consensus of opinion, and it would still be an open question if the exceptions produced by "superstition" (presumably uncriticized custom) and "partiality to ourselves" might not be sounder sanctions than Butler's intellectually screened conscience—as indeed cultural relativism and individual hedonism would respectively pronounce.

3. There is a third argument which is more compelling. This is the argument from fitness or appropriateness to human nature. I quote a key passage at length:

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Man may act according to that principle or inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a way disproportionate to, and violate, his real proper nature. Suppose a brute creature by any bait to be allured into a snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the bent of his nature, leading him to gratify his appetite: there is an entire correspondence between his whole nature and such an action: such action therefore is natural. But suppose a man, foreseeing the same danger of certain ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present gratification; he in this instance would follow his strongest desire, as did the brute creature: but there would be as manifest a disproportion, between the nature of a man and such an action, as between the meanest work of art and the skill of the greatest master in that art. Which disproportion arises, not from considering the action singly in *itself,* or in its *consequences;* but from *comparison* of it with the nature of the agent.[17]

The core of this argument is that such an imprudent act is contrary to human nature (that is, a man's personality structure), and human nature is the moral sanctioning criterion. Having recently studied the self-realization theory and seen what a dynamic sanctioning power the integrative action of the human personality has, we can fully respect the core of this argument. But how does Butler establish its sanctioning power? In the self-realization theory, the sanction comes from the dynamics of personality integration eliminating or modifying dispositions that have persistently frustrating consequences. But Butler excludes consideration of "*consequences.*" Just by cool intellectual *comparison,* an act's inappropriateness to human nature is supposed to be perceived. Granted that reflective conscience does obtain a clear intuition of the inappropriateness of an act to human nature, what moral authority arises therefrom? None, unless there is something that sanctions human nature as a moral criterion.

With a half-finished picture puzzle, you can pick up a shape and then perceive, by comparing it with the missing shape you

[17] *Ibid.,* p. 60.

had selected it to fill, that it will not fit. But the act of trying to put it there is not immoral, nor do you say that the shape in your hand is immoral because it will not fit the shape required in the picture puzzle. Fitting shapes into picture puzzles must be first made out to possess a moral criterion, sanctioned somehow, before the appropriateness of a piece to a gap in the puzzle can be judged morally right.

This is Butler's problem. Suppose we have the perception that an act is fitting, or not fitting, to human nature, what of it morally? The thing Butler needs is some sanction that human nature is a moral criterion of right and wrong conduct. He has excluded all empirical dynamic sanctions such as strength of motivation or the effects of frustrating consequences. Unless he does make a final appeal to a theological sanction, his only recourse is to claim that he intuits directly and with certainty that human nature is the ultimate moral criterion. Then acts fitting to human nature will automatically be sanctioned also as morally right. But Butler never takes this step. Perhaps he saw how risky it would be. For there are many conceptions of human nature—for instance, Hobbes's conception of man as through and through egoistic. A Hobbesian might claim an incorrigible intuition of that!

What Butler does do in the last resort is after all to appeal to the theological sanction. God made human nature and conscience. So, human nature (as God made it, not as man may erroneously conceive it) is a divinely sanctioned moral criterion, and the reflective intuition of conscience thereby becomes morally authoritative. The following sentence makes this transition: "Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path, and follow this guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity." [18]

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

And this, on my examination, is the best that can be made of Butler's argument for conscience as a moral sanction: (1) an appeal to the meaning of the term *conscience* in common usage; (2) an appeal to the responses of the ordinary man; (3) an appeal to fitness with human nature. The first is irrelevant to the purpose in hand. The second yields little more than Butler's own conviction of the incorrigible authority of conscience. Only the third gives any real promise as an argument. Butler here refers to an intuition of the fitness of an act to man's nature. Even if this judgment were incorrigible and such as to have the authority Butler desires for it, it would not be a moral judgment unless there were some prior incorrigible intuition sanctioning Butler's conception of human nature as an ultimate moral criterion. But Butler does not take this step, and with good reason. It would be easily subject to contrary evidence. Butler thus, unsuspectingly, adds some evidence of his own against the probability of a formalistic justification of the voice of conscience by pure intuition. He finally appeals to an external source of justification for the deliverances of conscience, to the theological. And this in spite of his earlier intention to sanction conscience in its own right. And, of course, only so would conscience be an ultimate criterion of right and wrong conduct—which is what a moral sense theory seeks to demonstrate.

The Categorical Imperative (Kant)

Kant is the greatest and the most extreme of the ethical formalists. He seeks to sanction moral judgments by the logical principle of non-contradiction, by pure reason, as he calls it. If any principle would be accepted as intuitively certain, this basic principle on which all valid reasoning depends would be that one. If a proposition is true, the denial of the proposition is false —not both p and not-p. So, if the ultimate criterion can be shown to be an instance or a derivation from this generally accepted and supposedly self-evident principle of reason, this moral principle will be sanctioned by the most firmly established

of purely rational principles. There will be no intrusion of empirical elements. Ethics will have acquired a purely formalistic a priori criterion for right and wrong.

Any rather brief summary of Kant's development of his ethics, as this section has to be, is bound to do great injustice to Kant's depth and insight. For I shall go as straight as I can to his formal ethical principle and ask how well it is supported. The rich context in which it is embedded will be mostly left out. The spirit of the context is that of a liberal utilitarianism, in defense of human freedom, the dignity of the individual, and universal mutual co-operation. But the categorical imperative in the center of this web is the most abstract conception of pure formal duty proposed in the history of ethics.

Kant starts off with the much quoted statement: "Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a *good will*." [19]

He points out that intelligence, courage, perseverance and other such praiseworthy qualities when put to bad ends render the acts even worse than without them. But with good will these become good qualities too.

Thus Kant begins his argument with some empirical evidences. He then describes the good will as "not good because of what it effects or accomplishes or because of its adequacy to achieve some proposed end; it is good only because of its willing —i.e., it is good in itself." It is not for its consequences, he is saying, that it is good. Moral willing is concerned with a person's motive purely, not the consequences. Then he restricts the definition of a moral act further as to the motive. "Regarded for itself," he continues, "it is to be esteemed incomparably higher than anything which could be brought about by it in favor of any inclination or even of the sum total of all inclinations." [20]

[19] From *Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. by Lewis W. Beck (The Library of Liberal Arts, Number 113), New York, 1959. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Liberal Arts Press, Inc., p. 9.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

By *inclination* he means the motives of pleasure, desire and happiness. These latter are the motives of natural behavior referred to in the causal description of acts. But a pure moral act has a superior motive—that of doing one's duty. This consists in the good will being guided solely by reason.

Here follows a passage of great interest in itself, to which I shall want to refer later in looking back over Kant's contribution. It is the passage where Kant contrasts reason, which for him directs duty through the good will, with instinct, which for him is allied to impulse, inclination, and the pursuit of happiness. It is developed in the context of natural biological adaptation. And in this passage, while recognizing happiness and the hedonic values as natural human values, he rejects them as moral values, reserving the latter solely for duty and obligation. Here is the passage:

In the natural constitution of an organized being, i.e., one suitably adapted to life, we assume an axiom that no organ will be bound for any purpose which is not the fittest and best adapted to that purpose. Now if its preservation, its welfare—in a word its happiness—were the real end of nature in a being having reason and will, then nature would have hit upon a very poor arrangement in appointing the reason of the creature to be the executor of this purpose. For all the actions which the creature has to perform with this intention, and the entire rule of its conduct, would be dictated much more exactly by instinct, and that end would be far more certainly attained by instinct than it ever could be by reason. . . . In a word, nature would have taken care that reason did not break forth into practical use nor have the presumption, with its weak insight, to think out for itself the plan of happiness and the means of attaining it. Nature would have taken over not only the choice of ends but also that of means and with wise foresight would have intrusted both to instinct alone. . . . Reason is not, however, competent to guide the will safely with regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our needs (which it in part multiplies), and to this end an innate instinct would have led with far more certainty. But reason is given to us as a practical faculty, i.e., one which is meant to have an influence on the will. As nature has elsewhere distributed capacities

suitable to the functions they are to perform, reason's proper function must be to produce a will good in itself and not one good merely as a means, for to the former reason is absolutely essential. This will must indeed not be the sole and complete good but the highest good and the condition of all others, even of the desire for happiness. . . . For one perceives that nature here does not proceed unsuitably to its purpose, because reason, which recognizes its highest practical vocation in the establishment of a good will, is capable only of a contentment of its own kind, i.e., one that springs from the attainment of a purpose, which in turn is determined by reason, even though it injures the ends of inclination.[21]

Reason and the good will and, by implication, duty, which comes out of these, are thus separated from instinct, inclination, and happiness. There is not only a conceptual separation suggested here but actually a dynamic opposition. For reason could interfere with instinct, and it "is not competent to guide . . . the satisfaction of all our needs (which in part it multiplies)," and the good will has a "contentment of its own kind" (different from the satisfaction of inclination and happiness) "that springs from the attainment of a purpose which in turn is determined by reason" and which may "injure the ends of inclination."

Reason directing the good will is here described as actually capable of frustrating the ends of inclination. This seems to be the dynamics of the typical faculty psychology originating in Plato's *Republic*—and operating in this passage much as Plato described the proper operation of the faculties for the moral man; reason directs the will which controls the appetites (or inclinations). Reason, in this interpretation, at one end dynamically opposes the appetites or inclinations at the other end. Reason working through the good will morally ought to regulate conduct, but sometimes the appetites and inclinations gain the upper hand and immoral conduct occurs. It seems to me that elements of this traditional theory of the dynamics of a faculty psychology run through Kant's argument for an ethics of pure reason and lend it a plausibility that would be lacking without

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 11–13.

it. But in the end, as we shall see, Kant reduces the dynamic power of pure reason and the good will to a vanishing point.

Having thus conceptually separated pure reason and the demand for doing one's duty from inclination and the pursuit of pleasure and happiness, Kant next emphasizes this separation further by a series of examples showing that a man can never be sure he is acting from duty if any element of inclination can be assigned to his act. This is the phase of his ethics with which Kant has become particularly associated in the popular mind. For instance, Kant observes, "To be kind where one can is duty." But often a man is kind to others because he is sympathetically constituted and so gets an inner satisfaction in spreading joy. "But," writes Kant, "I say that however dutiful and amiable it may be, that kind of action has no true moral worth. It is on a level with other inclinations, such as the inclination to honor." Suppose, however, this "friend to mankind was clouded by a sorrow of his own which extinguished all sympathy . . . and now suppose him to tear himself, unsolicited by inclination, out of this dead insensibility and to do this action only from duty and without any inclination—then for the first time his action has genuine moral worth." [22]

The question now is to find what this duty is that constitutes "genuine moral worth" and is free from all incentive of inclination. It will be a command or imperative that comes solely from reason. Kant finds he can distinguish two sorts of imperatives—the hypothetical and the categorical.

A hypothetical imperative is one in which a purposive end demands a means to attain that end. In analyzing the nature of the hypothetical imperative, Kant comes very near describing the built-in norm of a purposive act which we called a "selective system" (Ch. 2, pp. 23–28). In the dynamics of a purposive act, it will be recalled, we observed that the impulsive drive of the purpose instituted a terminal goal as the conditions of quiescence for the drive. Then this same drive charged trial acts as means toward the achievement of the goal. The dynamic impulse

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

for the trial act as a means was the identical impulse which set up the terminal goal as the end served by the means. The impulse for setting up the goal also set up the means as necessary for the attainment of the goal. And the drive for the goal then functioned as the norm, or in Kant's language the imperative, demanding the correct means for the goal, and it dynamically corrected errors in the choice of means. The drive for the goal acting as a norm selected the correct from the incorrect choice of means. That is why the purposive structure can be aptly called a selective system. The crucial feature in the structure is its split dynamics by which the very drive that sets the goal as the end likewise charges the selection of the means to that end and demands the correct means. So, it can properly be said that the choice of means which *ought* to be made is that of the correct means for the attainment of the goal of the drive. This *ought* is dynamically sanctioned by the drive for the goal which demands at the same time the correct means for its attainment.

Kant comes very near describing the normative action of a purposive structure in describing his hypothetical imperative. But he robs it of most of its central drive dynamics by couching his description in the language of reason and speaking as if the imperative connection between the means and the end were a logical rather than a dynamic one. "Whoever wills an end," he says, "so far as reason has decisive influence on his action, wills also the indispensably necessary means to it that lie in his power." Here he has the central insight of the split dynamics of a selective system which institutes an imperative or *ought* relation between a means and an end. He seems to be saying that the dynamic action of a rationally guided will for an end charges not only the aim for the end but at the same time the aim for the means toward reaching the end. If he stopped here, he would be describing (in old-fashioned psychological terms, to be sure) the dynamic structure of a purposive act (described by us earlier in modern drive psychology terms). But the next sentence of his takes nearly all the drive and dynamics out of the description. "This proposition," he says, "in what concerns the will is

analytical; for in willing an object as my effect, my causality as an acting cause, i.e., the use of the means, is already thought, and the imperative derives the concept of necessary actions to this end from the concept of willing this end." [23]

What this sentence does is to change a dynamic psychological description of a man's selecting a means for an end into a logical relation between two concepts in *thought*. And the dynamic psychological and biological necessity of a drive for a purposive end likewise charging the anticipation for a means in action is transformed into a logical necessity of a connection between two concepts in an analytical proposition. For an analytical proposition is simply one in which the meaning of the predicate is included in the meaning of the subject, as for instance "A husband is a male spouse." The truth of this proposition can be derived by simply analyzing the meaning of the two concepts and seeing that they necessarily in logical consistency belong together. No reference to observations of experience is needed. There is nothing empirical about it. Similarly Kant is here saying the *concept* of willing an end logically includes in its *meaning* the willing of a means. Or, as we often say colloquially, a means implies an end and *vice versa*. He is saying that the concepts of means and end are analytically related, and so the hypothetical imperative that develops from the relationship between them is necessary by a logical necessity—by reason.

I dwell on this transition not only to remark on Kant's keen empirical insight as to the dynamic structure of a purposive act, even if he did not follow it through; but more particularly to call attention to the tantalizing mixture of empirical dynamic elements in his argument along with the purely rational logical features on which he is ultimately going to pivot his supreme ethical norm of good conduct.

The hypothetical imperative, however, even with the analytical logical interpretation Kant gives it, is not an imperative of pure reason. It depends on somebody's having an inclination to attain an end. It cannot, therefore, institute an action of "genu-

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

ine moral worth." Hypothetical imperatives are characteristic of the technical activities of practical life wherever skill is required as in the activities of artisans and scientists. They are also the imperatives of prudence, where a person is seeking to maximize his individual happiness. They are not the moral imperative.

The moral imperative must be one stripped of all empirical references, whether of consequences or inclinations or any other natural features of an act. Being free of all empirical determination, it must be a priori, something derived from pure reason. If such an imperative could be conceived, it would be a *categorical imperative.* It would have to be something which reason would recognize as necessary in the very conception of it. Contrasting it with the hypothetical imperative, Kant says, "If I think of a hypothetical imperative as such, I do not know what it will contain until the condition is stated [i.e., an end must be first set empirically to see the necessity of a means]. But if I think of a categorical imperative, I know immediately what it contains." [24]

Note the suggested cognitive sanction here of "knowing immediately." Such an imperative must be a law which "contains no condition to which it is restricted" so that "there is nothing in it except the universality of the law as such to which the maxim of action should conform."

Following these conditions Kant finds he can state such a law, and there would be only one such law. "There is only one categorical imperative," he states. "It is: Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

This is Kant's first and most general formulation which would apply to all rational beings whether men or angels. In a second formulation as it applies to men, the "universal law" may be thought of as a "universal law of nature." Kant then tries this principle out on four typical ethical problems. I will take up only one, for the crux of the matter is essentially the same for all four—namely, that if the categorical imperative is violated,

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 39.

the act runs into a self-contradiction. There the heart of the categorical imperative shows up. It is the logical principle of non-contradiction applied to acts of conduct.

Suppose a man in need of money contemplates borrowing with a promise to pay back but with no intention of keeping his promise.

> Now, this principle of self-love or of his own benefit may very well be compatible with his whole future welfare, but the question is whether it is right. He changes the pretension of self-love into a universal law and then puts the question: How would it be if my maxim became a universal law? He immediately sees that it could never hold as a universal law of nature and be consistent with itself; rather it must necessarily contradict itself. For the universality of a law which says that anyone who believes himself to be in need could promise what he pleased with the intention of not fulfilling it would make the promise itself and the end to be accomplished by it impossible; no one would believe what was promised to him but would only laugh at any such assertion as vain pretense.[25]

This is the substance of Kant's ethics in practice. Take the categorical imperative as the ultimate criterion for determining a man's duty. In any specific case put the maxim on which the intention of a proposed act would depend and see if that maxim could be regarded as a universal law of nature without self-contradiction. If it could not, the act is wrong. If it could, such as an intention always to keep one's promises, then the act is right.

This is a formalistic theory because the rightness or wrongness of an act has nothing to do with its possible consequences, nor, in a "genuinely moral act," even with a man's inclinations. The criterion is that of the self-consistency of the act as applied to all men as rational agents, who recognize the logical necessity in pure reason of the principle of non-contradiction.

How is this ultimate ethical criterion of non-contradiction as formulated by the categorical imperative to be sanctioned? Why should any man conform to it, especially if his inclinations lean

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

another way? One would think Kant would make use of intuition as to the self-evidence of the principle of non-contradiction. Implicitly, Kant does, I feel, constantly rely on this intuition. But he does not ever take the simple course of appealing to it explicitly. Possibly he was aware of the precariousness of the appeal to self-evidence. Too many asseverated self-evident principles have been proved false in past philosophical history.

Kant takes a much more circuitous route. He says that the argument up to the point of enunciating the categorical imperative simply shows that it is a clear and a workable conception, and "the only condition under which a will can never come into conflict with itself." [26] And presently he adds ingenuously, "But why should I subject myself as a rational being, and thereby all other beings endowed with reason, to this law?" [27] He cannot appeal to interest: "I will admit that no interest impels me to do so, for that would then give no categorical imperative." [28]

By this time in the development of his theory all earthly dynamics have evaporated from the categorical imperative. And of course, he cannot appeal to consequences.

His appeal is by way of his metaphysics leaning on certain distinctions he made out in the *Critique of Pure Reason* between the phenomenal world of nature determined by the forms imposed upon it of space, time, and causality, and a noumenal world of things-in-themselves of which we can know little and which exists beyond the phenomenal world. He argues that the categorical imperative implies freedom of will, for how could a person obey the imperative and do his duty unless he had a free will to do so? In the phenomenal world, a man is, on Kant's view, necessarily bound to be scientifically described in all that he does by the form of causality. Considered as an object of nature, a man is completely determined in his acts. But nothing prevents that as a noumenal self in the reality behind the appearances of natural phenomena, he should be a free person. As

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

a free and rational person, man's conceptions would be wholly in conformity with reason and so his moral conceptions would conform to the categorical imperative. Actually a man has his being in both worlds and thereby is subject to the moral problems that lead to ethical theory.

> For there is not the least contradiction between a thing in appearance (as belonging to the world of sense) being subject to certain laws from which it is independent as a thing or a being in itself. . . . This is why man claims to possess a will which does not let him become accountable for what belongs merely to his desires and inclinations, but thinks of actions, which can be done only by disregarding all desires and sensuous attractions, as possible and indeed necessary for him.[29]

But in terms of Kant's own metaphysical system, one wonders how phenomenal man with a phenomenal choice like that of the man considering whether to make a promise he could not keep, in spite of desires and inclinations, can will to do his duty as something "possible and indeed necessary for him." How can a noumenal pure reason reach a man in the causal formation of the phenomenal world and induce a choice against the sensuous desires and inclinations he is subject to?

Kant in the end admits he cannot answer this question, human reason cannot reach that far. The categorical imperative *as an idea* is "unconditionally necessary" to a rational man "as the fundamental condition of all his voluntary actions. Yet how pure reason without any other incentives . . . can itself furnish an incentive and produce an interest which would be called purely moral—to explain this, all human reason is wholly incompetent, and all the pains and work of seeking an explanation of it are wasted." [30]

Kant's final word is an appeal to "rational faith": "The idea of a pure intelligible world as a whole of all intelligences to which we ourselves belong as rational beings (though on the

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

other side we are at the same time members of a world of sense) is always a useful and permissible idea for the purpose of a rational faith." [31]

By following Kant's argument through in rather close detail as I have done, I come to feel that he furnishes himself the best refutation of his own theory. His metaphysical sanction ends in an *ignoramus* (we do not know) and a recommendation to take it on faith. Moreover, fruitful as his metaphysical theory has been in stimulating other theories and greater rigor in cognitive criticism, it has not been found tenable. So far as the categorical imperative is regarded as depending upon it, the sanction is weak. And Kant disdained the simple expedient of asserting that the categorical imperative was a self-evident principle. In his development, it floats without an acceptable sanction.

The question is worth asking, however, how this supreme ethical principle would have fared, if it had been presented as self-evident. What about his examples demonstrating the self-contradiction of the violation of duty? The great difficulty which critics have pointed out is that there does not seem to be anything intrinsically self-contradictory in presenting almost any maxim as a universal law provided consequences are excluded. There is nothing self-contradictory in the maxim that every man should break his promises, except in the consequences. If people generally break promises, the consequences would be that nobody would believe promises and so nobody would find it useful to make them. But the categorical imperative as a principle of pure reason and of pure self-consistency is supposed to have no truck with consequences or other natural phenomena. And when consequences are permitted to count, then on empirical utilitarian or even prudential grounds it will be found more satisfying in the long run to keep your promises and gain a reputation of being a responsible person than to be regarded as untrustworthy. To be sure, on utilitarian grounds there will probably be legitimate occasions when a promise

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

would better be broken. On the self-evident principle of the self-consistency of the categorical imperative, a promise would, of course, never be broken. But what would the self-consistency of this maxim entail at most? If I postulate as an ethical duty that every man should keep his promises, then clearly it would be inconsistent with this postulate if some man should break a promise. But equally if I postulate as an ethical duty that every man should break a promise, it would be inconsistent with the postulate if some man should keep a promise. The plausibility of Kant's illustrations comes from the fact that he draws in empirical evidences of the personal and social consequences and conflicts that develop if certain moral maxims are widely violated. But these natural consequences have nothing to do with pure logical self-consistency and non-contradiction.

In short, from pure logical self-consistency, even if it is accepted as a self-evident principle, nothing follows as regards good and bad or right and wrong in human conduct. Kant made the classic supreme effort to derive and cognitively sanction a moral criterion by pure reason, as a rational a priori principle. And it is the classic illustration of the improbability of success by that approach.

Yet many fruitful results come out of his effort and from his insights along the route of his argument. Probably the greatest of these is the prominence he gave to the concept of duty as a supreme moral value in opposition to inclination and the pursuit of happiness. We called attention to the importance of this opposition at an early stage of his argument when he still gave duty a dynamic element that could successfully oppose the dynamic attraction of inclination. This opposition lasts to the end when duty finally acquires the reality of a thing in itself as against the mere phenomenal appearance of natural inclination. Now, this relation of duty to happiness (and with a reference to adaptation) as two values opposed to each other and not to be derived from one another is an issue never before brought up in just that way. This issue hovers over ethical theory from

Kant's time down. We shall pick it up in the last chapter of this book and suggest that a frank acceptance of an opposition between what amounts to these same two values regarded as irreducible to one another, and often in conflict with one another but each with a certain range of priority, is perhaps the way toward getting a solution of most of the troublesome theoretical problems of ethics. But our solution will be on the empirical level. We shall suggest that there are two distinct *dynamic* sources of value, both, however, open to empirical observation and description.

The Indefinable Good (G. E. Moore)

After studying the most rarefied form of a priori ethical theory, Kant's categorical imperative, where further can one expect to go in this direction? No further. But this type of sanctioning of an ethical concept can take many shapes, and no contemporary account of ethical theory would be complete without an examination of G. E. Moore's view that good is an immediately intuited indefinable quality. Moreover, Moore's analysis is the springboard from which the linguistic theories, to be considered in the next chapter, sprang.

The opening stages of Moore's argument are linguistic in form, though the final stage is an appeal to intuition. His theory is, accordingly, ultimately a form of intuitive theory.

Moore begins by pointing out the supreme importance of definition in any discussion of value. "How 'good' is to be defined," he writes, "is the most fundamental question in all Ethics." [32] He then sets aside the verbal definition, which merely equates symbols by an arbitrary stipulation, and he sets aside the dictionary definition which describes the usage of a word. These are not the sort of definitions he means. But "We may, when we define horse," he says, "mean something much more important. We may mean that a certain object, which we all of us know, is composed in a certain manner; that it has four legs,

[32] G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge University, 1903), p. 5.

a head, a heart, a liver, etc., etc., all of them arranged in a definite relation to one another." [33]

This last is essentially our descriptive definition. His analysis so far follows our account in Chapter 4, pp. 86 ff. And the great importance to ethics of the descriptive definition, we pointed out, is that this is the basic ethical criterion of value in discourse and presumably refers to a natural ethical norm like that which it describes.

But now Moore does something surprising. He states that in the meaning of the last definition above, good is indefinable. And the reason for its being indefinable is that it is not composed of parts. Good, he says, is analogous to yellow. Yellow is also a simple quality and so indefinable in Moore's terms. One may correlate yellow with light vibrations but the latter are not the quality yellow. To try to identify yellow with the light vibrations which on stimulating the normal eye produce the quality yellow would be a fallacious identification.

From this analogy Moore makes the next step in his argument which has had momentous consequences on ethical theory ever since. He says the identification of the simple quality good with any other quality or group of qualities is a fallacy of the same sort as the identification of yellow with light vibrations. He denominates this ethical fallacy the *naturalistic fallacy*. For he conceives of good as a "non-natural" quality different from the "natural" qualities, yellow, sweet, hard, and the like, or from pleasure, desire, and the like with which latter the quality good is often identified.

Moore is unquestionably correct in saying that such an identification of good with something else "is to be met with in almost every book on Ethics." [34] And he is correct in saying that such an identification of good with something else is not recognized in these books as a fallacy. When the identification is made, it is often intended as a definition of ethical value and as an ostensive definition, which is a sort of telescoped descriptive

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

definition. Just think back over the theories we have studied and you will observe that either directly or indirectly good is identified with something else—conformity to custom, pleasure, desire, reduction of social tension, self-realization, adaptation, the deliverance of conscience, the concept of duty in conformity with the categorical imperative. These are all for Moore (except possibly the last) instances of the naturalistic fallacy. It is the failure of ethical writers to notice the fallacy, he believes, that has caused the strife among ethical theories. All schools have their pet correlates for good and do battle for these diverse correlates, ignoring what these are all roughly correlated with, but not properly identifiable with—namely the simple, unanalyzable quality good itself. Once the quality good is recognized as an ultimate real entity in its own right, then the strife of ethical systems will cease, for all will be agreed as to what good is, and there will be nothing to battle about. Good is good. That is the end of the question.

This is Moore's theory. In theory nothing could be more simple. But there is a continuing question. How does Moore demonstrate, or persuade those who remain doubtful, that there is such a simple non-natural quality good? There is nothing self-contradictory, or logically impossible, in the theory. This can be readily admitted. Just as the simple quality yellow can be attributed to certain objects or experiences, so might a simple quality good. There is no question about the existence of an unanalyzable sensory quality yellow.[35] There does, however, seem to be a question in the minds of many of Moore's readers regarding the existence of a simple quality good.

Moore approaches this question by a series of linguistic argu-

[35] This statement is not quite true. Organicists and pragmatists have consistently cast doubt on the ultimacy of simple qualities. For these philosophers, and even for some not belonging to these schools, the results of a method of element analysis have been regarded as useful instruments for the solution of special problems and consequently as valuable *artificial* products of a method of procedure, but not by any means as ultimate realities. In the apt terms once coined by Lowenberg, they are post-analytical, not preanalytical data.

ments. The aim of these arguments is to show that what we mean by good is clearly different from what we mean by any of the suggested items that the traditional ethical schools have identified with good.

Before examining some of these arguments, a point must be brought out which might have an influence on the conclusion to be reached. This is that Moore is not actually justified in his assertion that good is indefinable. He has shown only that regarded as a simple unanalyzable quality, it cannot be defined by a descriptive definition of the sort which defines a complex object by describing the essential characteristics into which the object can be analyzed. This is obvious. Clearly an unanalyzable entity cannot be descriptively defined by a definition which stipulates that what is being defined is a complex analyzable object. But a simple entity can be perfectly well defined by what is generally called an ostensive definition. Through such a definition, a term is defined by means of some operation, such as pointing, which leads a person to discriminate the object referred to by the term defined. The object defined by an ostensive definition may be either complex or simple. It may be a horse or a sensory quality yellow. As soon as the object is discriminated, a descriptive definition may be substituted for the ostensive definition and is much more precise in its analysis of the defining character. If the object defined is simple, however, the form of the ostensive definition remains after analysis, with just this significant addition—that the object defined is now *described* as simple. So when Moore describes good as a simple unanalyzable quality, he is defining good as fully and precisely for his theory as if he were defining a horse, or any other complex analyzable object. An ostensive definition thus turns out to be a telescoped descriptive definition, for it is always a reference to something factual (even if sometimes a mistaken reference) and contains an implicit description of that very object of reference (even when the description asserts that the object described is unanalyzable).

The importance of calling attention to this point is that so far

as definition goes, a definition of the term "good" as referring to a simple quality pleasure is not, from the definitional aspect, any different from defining the term "good" as referring to a simple quality good. As far as the definition of the term "good" is concerned, the two definitions are in the same boat. The only question is, and that is the crucial one for Moore, whether in fact there is a simple unanalyzable quality good that can be ostensively referred to.

The ostensive reference does not have to be the physical pointing of a finger, as in pointing at a yellow wall or a necktie. It can be any operation that indicates what the term is referring to. One cannot physically point at pleasure or pain, but one can indicate these qualities by producing a sweet taste, a gentle caress, a charming smile, or alternatively by a prick or a burn or a wrench of the arm. By such operations pleasure and pain as simple nonphysical qualities can be discriminated. What is required of Moore to substantiate his theory is some comparable operation that will lead to a discrimination of his simple nonnatural quality good.

This he does, in fact, try to furnish by his linguistic arguments. What these amount to are operations with the meanings of words, through which he hopes his readers will get the intuition, the immediate experience, he thinks he has got of this simple quality good, which is unanalyzable and unidentifiable with any other qualities of human experience.

His linguistic arguments are numerous. We can give here only a few samples and for the rest the interested reader must go to Moore's own writings. But the arguments all have the same tenor, and a few samples are sufficient to see whether he is making a fair case for himself, or whether he is overlooking a rather obvious alternative way of interpreting the evidence which does not require an inference to a new cosmic entity justified only by his particular way of intepreting the evidence.

The following passage is a fair sample:

> Suppose a man says "I am pleased"; and suppose that is not a lie or a mistake but the truth. Well, if it is true, what does it mean?

It means that his mind . . . has at this moment a certain feeling called pleasure. "Pleased" means nothing but having pleasure. . . . What we have is one definite thing, absolutely indefinable, some one thing that is the same in all the various degrees and in all the various kinds of it that there may be. . . . We can . . . describe its relations to other things, but define it we can *not*. And if any one tried to define pleasure for us as being any other natural object; if anybody were to say, for instance, that pleasure *means* the sensation of red, and were to proceed to deduce from that that pleasure is a colour, we should be entitled to laugh at him and to distrust his future statements about pleasure. Well, that would be the same fallacy which I have called the naturalistic fallacy. . . . Though pleasure is pleasure and nothing else whatever, yet we feel no difficulty in saying that we are pleased. The reason, of course, is that when I say "I am pleased" I do *not* mean that "I" am the same thing as "having pleasure." And similarly no difficulty need be found in my saying that "pleasure is good" and yet not meaning that pleasure is the same thing as "good," that pleasure *means* good, or that good *means* pleasure.[36]

The analogy of simple red with simple good and the argument that just as red cannot be identified with pleasure, so simple good cannot be identified with pleasure do not, of course, furnish any evidence for the existence of the simple quality good. If such a quality good did exist, Moore would be correct, on the analogy with the quality red, in maintaining that pleasure and good could not be identified. But the question remains whether in fact there is a simple quality good.

The argument produces some evidence only toward the end when Moore points out truly that the *meaning* of pleasure is not exactly the same as the *meaning* of good. But the reader may notice that pleasure and good at the end of this passage have shifted their references from what they were at the beginning. At the beginning Moore was comparing the actual simple qualities red and pleasure and by implication an imagined simple quality good. The actual qualities red and pleasure are, of course, not symbols but facts and are not to be characterized as

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

meanings. But at the end of this passage, Moore is talking about meanings and so is referring to the words, the symbols, "pleasure" and "good" and the meanings with which these words are characterized. He points out that the *meaning* of the word "good" is different from the *meaning* of the word "pleasure." But does this fact demonstrate the existence of a simple entity good which can be felt or intuited directly the way I can directly feel pleasure as a distinct existent feeling?

In the foregoing instance the suggestion—that of the traditional hedonist—is that the term "good" should be identified with the unanalyzable feeling of pleasure. Suppose the attempt is to identify "good" with a complex whole which can be descriptively defined in Moore's sense of a significant definition. Let us entertain the idea, Moore says, that "When we think that A is good, we are thinking that A is one of the things which we desire to desire." We should then be equating the meaning of "desiring to desire" with the meaning of *good*. Now, observes Moore,

> It may indeed be true that what we desire to desire is always also good; . . . but it is very doubtful whether this is the case, and the mere fact that we understand very well what is meant by doubting it, shews clearly that we have two different notions before our minds." He points out that "any one can easily convince himself by inspection that the predicate of this proposition—"good"—is positively different from the notion of "desiring to desire" which enters into its subject.[37]

Here also what Moore demonstrates is that in the common understanding of the word "good," there is a difference of meaning from the meaning of "desiring to desire" or of any other complex of words such as "conformity of custom," "realization of the self," "adaptation to one's environment," or whatever. But again, granted this difference of meaning in the terms, does this indicate that what may be meant by the term "good" actually exists as a simple unanalyzable entity?

Does the meaning of a word give any guarantee for the exist-

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

ence of what the meaning of the word refers to? Does the meaning of the words "centaur" or "unicorn," "dragon" or "griffon" guarantee the existence of the objects referred to? From the meaning of a word, or idea, or notion, nothing is indicated as to the existence of the object meant.

For the existence of an unanalyzable simple good Moore requires something more than the meaning of a word. This something more comes out in a passage like this, where Moore evidently believes he is just summarizing the linguistic arguments of the preceding pages:

> Whoever will attentively consider with himself what is actually before his mind when he asks himself the question "Is pleasure (or whatever it may be) after all good?" can easily satisfy himself that he is not merely wondering whether pleasure is pleasant. And if he will try this experiment with each suggested definition in succession, he may become expert enough to recognize that in every case he has before his mind a unique object with regard to the connection of which with any other object a distinct question may be asked.[38]

This passage makes a sharp shift in Moore's argument. This is no longer a purely linguistic argument about the differing meanings of various ethical words or notions connected with words. The argument now shifts to an appeal to an expert's observation of "what is actually before the mind" and an assertion that "in every case he has before his mind a unique object."

Moore carries this new argument further. He asserts:

> Every one does in fact understand the question, "Is this good?" When he thinks of it, his state of mind is different from what it would be, were he asked "Is this pleasant, or desired, or approved?" It has a distinct meaning for him, even though he may not recognize in what respect it is distinct. Whenever he thinks of "intrinsic value" or "intrinsic worth," or says that a thing "ought to exist," he has before his mind the unique object—the unique property of things—which I mean by "good." [39]

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Here he passes from an appeal to the intuition of an expert to the intuitions of everyone. The cognitive sanction for the moral criterion of his simple unanalyzable good is not only the incorrigibility of a particular sort of cognition, but the universality of this cognition among all men.

In summary, his approach to the view that there exists a simple unanalyzable quality good is by way of the discrimination of meanings showing that the word "good" and the notion we have of its meaning is not identifiable with the meaning of any of the many words with which it has been traditionally identified. A failure to notice this difference he calls "the naturalistic fallacy." But this argument through the discrimination of meanings does not establish the existence of the object which is the unique meaning of the word "good." It does not even establish the identification of this meaning with the character of a simple unanalyzable quality. The unique meaning of good for many persons could be something quite different. The procedure, however, can be regarded as having a useful aim—that of pointing to the simple quality which Moore believes he intuits. Just as a pointing gesture can lead a person with normal eyesight to obtain the sensation of yellow and identify it with the meaning of the word "yellow," so the operation with the meanings of ethical terms might be expected to lead a person with normal intellectual powers to obtain the intuition of the simple quality good and identify it with the meaning of the word "good."

So, in the end, Moore's argument rests on the question as to whether the claims for such an intuition can be justified. Moore obviously believes he has such an incorrigible intuition. He is on very weak ground, however, when he claims that every man has it. He offers no positive evidence for this claim, but he does suggest an explanation as to why many people may fail to get the intuition. It may be due to lack of expertness in the proper sort of discrimination. This might be. But again he gives no positive evidence that this is the explanation. Actually, very few people have confirmed Moore's intuition. And among those who have not are many highly trained philosophers. The evi-

dence for the existence of a simple quality good is very weak indeed. Of course, Moore can say that when such a claim is based on incorrigible intuition, questions of empirical evidence are irrelevant to even one such intuition. Here the empiricist makes his regular answer that claims for incorrigible modes of cognition—whether of self-evidence, intuitive certainty, or indubitability of immediate data—have so often proved false or doubtful that this type of justification ceases to have any claim for credibility. As Descartes once said in regard to the reliability of sense experience, "It is wiser not to trust entirely to anything by which we have once been deceived." [40] Men have often been deceived by claims of incorrigible cognition. So Moore's appeal to intuition in support of his simple quality good need not be taken very seriously.

But what about the evidence he presents for a unique meaning in the word "good"? This does seem to be a justifiable claim. But it can be easily explained. This is one of the oldest and most used words in the language. It has, as Moore truly says, been identified with many things in the long course of its history. It would inevitably carry the effects of all these uses in its significance. The uniqueness of the meaning of "good" lies not in something simple that it refers to, but in its complexity of reference. In its connotation it embodies every ethical interpretation that has descended into its present usage. It connotes pleasure, desire, approval, success, self-fulfillment, obedience to the law and to the will of God, the feeling of a clear conscience, and many other things. A man sensitive to a language will indeed recognize the uniqueness of the meaning of this rich word. No other word has just this connotation. But its uniqueness lies in the complexity of its references, and this complexity is analyzable. In fact, a study of ethics such as we are making here may be regarded as an attempt to analyze the references of the meaning of "good" and to show which of these can be justified in fact and to what extent.

[40] Rene Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," in R. M. Eaton, ed., *Descartes Selections,* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927) p. 90.

Accordingly, Moore's "naturalistic fallacy" is a misconception based on his erroneous notion that the unique meaning of "good" was a reference to a simple intuited quality. The most enlightening thing we can do is precisely to see how many things "good" refers to and to identify its meaning with as many of these as can justify themselves by throwing light on sanctioned human conduct.

Before we leave this sort of intuitive theory, some reference should be made to men like W. D. Ross who by a linguistic procedure similar to Moore's discriminate a unique quality right, distinct from good. For Ross an act is right if it is fitting for a situation, if it has "the greatest amount of suitability possible under the circumstances." [41] This fitness is something immediately intuited as a quality of a moral act belonging to the situation. One begins to see that by this sort of linguistic treatment any ethical term could develop a unique quality and, far from simplifying ethical theory, could soon throw it into a confused babble of conflicting incorrigible intuitions of unanalyzable ethical qualities.

At the same time, Ross has an important ethical insight. His insight is that in a complex social situation a perceptive man immediately sees, by what is sometimes called an intuitive induction, the appropriate act for the situation. He is like the skilled tennis player who sees just the proper shot for making a point in a match. So, a President or Prime Minister sizing up a national situation may by an intuitive induction sense the proper policy and the proper act to break an impasse at a Cabinet meeting. This is the sort of thing Ross seems to have in mind as the intuited fitness or rightness of an act for a situation.

But one does not have to argue for a distinct quality of rightness to describe and justify such acts. An analysis of the dynamics of the situation will give the same results in purely descriptive empirical terms. In fact, the ethics of the social situation (Ch. 7) does just this.

[41] W. D. Ross, *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford, 1939), p. 51.

Concluding Remarks

A first observation that one can hardly fail to make upon a review of the foregoing theories is what a great variety of appeals there are to cognitive certainty as a moral sanction. The multiplicity of the appeals must itself produce some tremor of uncertainty about the very idea of certainty. And one's faith in the method of certainty must be even more severely shaken at the incompatibility of many of these incorrigible proposals. Ross's intuition of a simple unanalyzable right is not compatible with Kant's a priori categorical imperative. Both cannot be right. They are contraries. And Moore's intuited good is not compatible with Sidgwick's good, derived from his self-evident principles of Prudence, Justice, and Benevolence, which ultimately Sidgwick finds he can identify with pleasure. Even from these few samples, the method of trying to sanction moral concepts and principles by incorrigible intuition and the a priori yield conflicting and contrary results. One can only conclude that the method is unreliable and leads to confusion rather than to a clarification of ethical problems.

Secondly, it is difficult to see how a merely cognitive intuition, even supposing it were true, could have any effect on human motivation to change a man's conduct. Kant brings this difficulty out with glaring clarity. Suppose Kant's categorical imperative were acceptable and that in the realm of pure reason the breaking of a promise were universally wrong a priori. Suppose a man recognizes the truth of this maxim in his calm moments of pure reason and remembers this maxim with intellectual clarity in the midst of a dynamic situation which motivates him strongly to break a promise. Let us say the situation is the famous one posed by Socrates to Polemarchus in the first book of the *Republic* where Polemarchus has just defined justice as giving a man what is owed him, which is essentially one way of keeping a promise. Suppose, says Socrates, a man has loaned you a weapon and now in a fit of madness asks you

to give it back to him. Is it right that you should do so? The whole dynamics of the situation inclines you to refuse and break the implied promise to return it. Can the mere awareness of an a priori true maxim motivate you to resist your inclination to break your promise? Remember Kant consistently says if it does have this dynamic effect, the act is no longer a "genuine moral act." An intuition of pure reason has by definition no motivating power in it. It is impotent to change a human decision. Then what ethical use is it, if ethics is regarded as concerned with human conduct?

Of course, ethics could be privately redefined by a Kantian as a development of the logic of the concept of the categorical ought in pure reason. This would be a pure logical system developed from certain definitions and postulates and would be reminiscent of Kant's classical treatment of his categorical imperative. Like any consistently developed logical system, its propositions would be valid, and the implied meaning of the postulates would be exhibited in rigorous clarity. But it would have nothing to do with human conduct and human decisions.

Another study of the same name with a long tradition behind it would continue—for it would be needed as much as ever—to concern itself with conduct and its dynamics, its motives and its consequences, and the criteria by which men can make better rather than worse decisions.

The same dilemma obtains for Moore's unanalyzable good, if there were such a thing. Remember this entity has nothing to do with pleasure, desire, approval, or anything else contaminated by psychology or the dynamics of human behavior. It is as motiveless as yellow. Suppose, then, an object or an act were perceived as characterized by this simple quality good. That would be an interesting fact like the observation that a canary is yellow or that an act is short or long. But what effect could it have on a human decision? Sidgwick was well aware of this point. For though his self-evident principles were stated in terms of the concept good, he promptly undertook to equate good with something psychological and concluded that this was pleasure.

Thereupon immediately the pleasure-pain dynamics of a regular hedonistic ethics flowed into his principles and gave them a dynamic sanctioning power so far as this dynamics went. Moore gains what dynamics he has for his simple quality good by intellectually intuiting that such psychologically dynamic things as pleasure are good. Then like Sidgwick he starts talking in effective hedonistic terms. And then the entity good becomes superfluous in determining what is better or worse in conduct, since his effective criterion, like Sidgwick's, is the hedonistic one.

In short, there is no dynamic sanctioning power to make a moral principle or concept effective for human conduct through merely cognitive intuition. A purely cognitive moral sanction is dynamically impotent. No matter how much a writer insists upon its certainty, it is still impotent, unless it becomes attached to something psychological or biological that is empirically known to have dynamic sanctioning power. Thereupon the cognitive sanction shows itself to be superfluous, even if not fictitious.

Thirdly, if one looks back over these intuitive and a priori ethical theories to see what their content is underneath the cognitive sanctions that cover them, one finds that the content consists of one or another of the empirical theories we had been studying earlier. The content of Sidgwick's intuitive ethics is a hedonistic utilitarian theory. That of Butler's moral sense ethics is a well-developed self-realization theory. That of Kant's a priori ethics is, for all its apparent aloofness from pleasure and desire, a supreme defense of universal freedom, individual dignity, and happiness, that is, an ideal utilitarianism. And Moore's indefinable good when practically applied to conduct comes out also as a kind of utilitarianism. In each instance, the detailed content of these theories is derived from empirical theories. What then is gained by superimposing upon the dynamic sanctions of these empirical theories, already well-evidenced as far as they go, intuitive and a priori sanctions which are historically open to so great suspicion of their reliability? What new con-

tent, what new evidence, facts, or hypotheses about human conduct have these intuitive and formalistic theories added to the development of ethics? None. At least, nothing on the formal side. A man like Butler may add a good deal, but what he added were empirical observations about human personality to the enrichment of his self-realization theory. The incorrigible intuition he ascribed to conscience added nothing constructive for ethics—quite the reverse. In general the contribution of the formalists has been indirect. They are many of them, like Sidgwick, highly critical, rigorous, analytical thinkers. They are often driven to the a priori in a sort of desperation to justify the passage over gaps which empiricists, eager to attain constructive workable hypotheses, have often overlooked. (Sidgwick and Mill are a fine contrast in this respect.) The contribution of the formalists is that of calling attention to these oversights and of stimulating more rigor and precision in the constructive work of the empiricists.

As to content, then, the intuitive and formalistic theories add nothing toward the solution of ethical problems. On the contrary, they lean for their content upon empirically developed theories. As to their method, it is sterile and dogmatic in its operation, and so far as it is successful in gaining followers, it is obstructive. It stands in the way of the free empirical development of ethical theory, and in practice it blinds men to spheres of evidence needed for the making of well-grounded decisions.

CHAPTER 12

EMOTIVE AND PRESCRIPTIVE THEORIES

The Linguistic Approach

THE MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENT in ethics is that of the linguistic school. Members of this school differ with one another as widely as members of the intuitionist school. But they all agree in the basic importance of a linguistic analysis of ethical sentences. And they all agree that sentences containing ethical terms such as *good, right, ought,* and their opposites are completely different in kind from declarative sentences which make statements of fact and are either true or false. The latter are scientific statements. Ethical sentences are not scientific statements. They are not true or false. It follows that a scientific ethics is impossible. Empirical theories run into trouble, according to the linguists, because they are misconceived. The ethical empiricist, in trying to make an empirical science out of ethical judgments, is trying to do something that cannot be done. He is trying to treat ethical judgments, which are not true or false, as if they were true. And the intuitionists and formalists in ethics all come under the same criticism; for they also are trying to treat ethical sentences as if they could be true.

Accordingly, the usual definition of ethics offered by members of the linguistic school is that *ethics consists in the analysis of*

sentences containing such terms as "good," "right," "ought," *and their opposites.*[1] Any empiricist, intuitionist, or formalist could very well accept this definition, expecting that an analysis of the meaning of such sentences would lead him out to the study of human conduct and the ethical criteria which determine whether such conduct is truly good or right or such as ought to be performed. But a follower of the linguistic school has no such expectations—or illusions, as he would say. The analysis of ethical sentences may yield criteria that can be applied to conduct, and again they may not, but in either case they will not yield ultimate ethical conclusions that are true or even false. He carefully defines ethics so as not to imply any such conclusions.

Clearly, this is a novel approach to ethics. It has become a dominant ethical theory of the mid-twentieth century in England and America. Its emergence can almost be dated at the publication of A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth, and Logic* in 1936. It grew out of the influence of the logical positivist school of philosophy in its analysis of science and philosophy based on the recent developments in symbolic logic.

This new type of logical analysis applied to ethics might not

[1] The linguistic theory has added another term to our subject—namely, *metaethics*. This comes out of treating ethics as a kind of language. For ordinary languages, there is the language we use in communicating with one another, and then there is the language employed when we talk about the language we use. There is thus a first order language and a second order language. The latter is then referred to as a metalanguage.

Now, when ethics is treated as a sort of communication, moral statements—commands, prescriptions, advice, and so on—are a first order language. But when one studies these first order statements to clarify their meanings and find justifications for them, then one is using a second order language. For the linguistic school, then, ethical theories are all *metaethics* contrasted with everyday moral communication which is plain ethics or morality.

To an empirical moralist this distinction is unnecessary, if not falsifying. For him conduct is a factual matter, and ethics is the construction of a theory about these facts purporting to be true. One may write theories about the methods of ethical theories, but only to help in improving one's basic ethical theory. The same would be the attitude of the formalist and intuitionist.

The serious use of the term *metaethics* is thus a symptom of a school.

necessarily, however, have led to the characteristic conclusions of the new linguistic school. Maurice Schlick, perhaps the most prominent of the early logical positivists, wrote an excellent little book on ethics with an entirely empirical approach along utilitarian lines. But the movement reached England in the height of G. E. Moore's influence there. The logical positivists became impressed with what Moore called the "naturalistic fallacy." While they did not accept Moore's intuitionism, they did become convinced of the validity of the "naturalistic fallacy," and their ethical theory was framed to evade the fallacy.

The linguistic theory of ethics was stated in its simplest and most striking form by A. J. Ayer. After him, without veering in any degree from its basic tenet of the contrast between an ethical and scientific statement, it passed through many phases. When one looks back over the course of these changes, one gets the sense that they are all in the direction of softening the shock of the initial thesis that an ethical statement cannot be true. For the first inference then is that ethical statements cannot be argued about. The later phases of the development of the linguistic theory of ethics show that there can still be much rational discussion on ethical issues. The view has been so modified by some of the linguists as to come very close to the empirical views. But an ethical linguist can always be spotted if he insists that in the last analysis an ethical statement can never be taken as a declarative scientific statement, true or false.

As sample exponents of the linguistic school, we shall examine the views of A. J. Ayer, Charles Stevenson, and R. M. Hare. These views are in chronological sequence and progressively soften the opposition between a non-rational and a rational (whether empirical, intuitive, or formal) treatment of ethics.

A. J. Ayer's Analysis

Ayer states his thesis in these words: "We shall set ourselves to show that in so far as statements of value are significant, they are ordinary 'scientific' statements; and that in so far as they

are not scientific, they are not in the literal sense significant, but are simply expressions of emotion that can be neither true nor false." [2]

Then he classifies the sorts of sentences to be found in "the ordinary system of ethics." There are first definitions of ethical terms; second, descriptions of the phenomena of moral experience; third, exhortations to moral virtue; and, lastly, "actual ethical judgments." None of these raises any problem except the last. Definitions furnish analyses of terms for their clarification. Descriptions of moral phenomena are scientific statements within the subject matter of psychology or sociology. Exhortations are not propositions at all, but ejaculations or commands "designed to provoke the reader to action of a certain sort." But what are the fourth group of "actual ethical judgments"? These are sentences which contain the terms "good," "right," "ought," and the like—the ethical terms.

Ayer next considers the common proposal of traditional ethics that ethical judgments be translated into statements of empirical fact. And he alludes to the hedonistic theory which "defines the rightness of actions, and the goodness of ends, in terms of pleasure, or happiness or satisfaction, to which they give rise." Such definitions, he says, make "moral judgments into a sub-class of psychological or sociological judgments," and adds, interestingly enough, that "for this reason they are very attractive to us." One here recalls that Maurice Schlick, whose philosophy was similar to Ayer's, was indeed a hedonist.

But Ayer declines to adopt this line of approach. The reason is that he accepts the concept of the naturalistic fallacy, and he repeats Moore's manner of exhibiting it. "Since it is not self-contradictory," he writes, "to say that some pleasant things are not good, . . . it cannot be the case that the sentence 'x is good' is equivalent to 'x is pleasant.' " [3] He generalizes, stating

[2] *Language, Truth, and Logic* (New York, Dover Publications, 1946), pp. 102–103.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

with Moore that "normative ethical symbols [are] indefinable in factual terms."

This is, as we pointed out when examining Moore's theory, a purely linguistic argument depending on the connotations of the word "good," which cannot indeed be identified in its total meaning with any one of its many connotative references.

But Ayer ceases to follow Moore at this point and refuses to accept Moore's appeal to intuition for the existence of a simple entity good. "For," says Ayer, "it is notorious that what seems intuitively certain to one person may seem doubtful, or even false, to another. So that unless it is impossible to provide some criterion by which one can decide between conflicting intuitions, a mere appeal to intuition is worthless as a test of a proposition's validity." Of course, no such criterion is forthcoming. What criterion of certainty could be more certain than intuitive certainty? So Ayer is in no sense a moral intuitionist.

And now comes Ayer's novel theory. He agrees with Moore that fundamental ethical concepts are unanalyzable. But he has a quite different explanation for the fact. Here is his much quoted statement of his theory:

> We say [that is, Ayer himself says] that the reason why they are unanalyzable is that they are mere pseudo-concepts. The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone, "You acted wrongly in stealing that money," I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, "You stole that money." In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. It is as if I had said, "You stole that money" in a peculiar tone of horror, or written it with the addition of some special exclamation marks. The tone, or the exclamation marks, adds nothing to the literal meaning of the sentence. It merely shows that the expression of it is attended by certain feelings of the speaker. . . . In every case in which one would commonly be said to be making an ethical judgment, the function of the relevant ethical word is purely "emotive."[4]

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 107–108.

Value judgments thus come to be known as emotive judgments.

Except for some amplifications, this short quotation gives his whole argument for the emotive judgment theory of ethics, and of value generally. Referring back to Ayer's classification of sentences found in ethical systems, we see that what he has done is to amalgamate the fourth group of sentences, "actual ethical judgments," with the third, "exhortations."

An ethical judgment in the form "Stealing is wrong" looks like a statement of fact. It looks like such a sentence as "Climbing is tiring" or "Crows are black." All three sentences are in the grammatical form of declaratives. They purport to describe matters of fact. And the last two sentences do just that. *Black* is an observable color which the last sentence attributes to crows. And *tiring* is an observable condition of the organism with an accompanying psychological state which that sentence attributes to the act of climbing. But *wrong* is not a factual observation like *black* and *tiring*. It gives no factual information, says Ayer. It is not a factual predicate that adds anything to the description of theft. And this is puzzling and paradoxical till one realizes that there is no difference of effect between saying "Stealing is wrong," and "Don't steal." Then suddenly it may dawn on one that the proper grammatical form for these expressions is the imperative. "Stealing is wrong" is really the imperative "Don't steal" masquerading as a declarative.

Realize that, and then the distinctive characteristic of the emotive judgment theory comes to light. This is that an imperative as a grammatical form is neither true nor false. "Stealing is wrong" cannot be verified. It just expresses my feeling about stealing and probably my intention to restrain someone from performing the act. "We can now see," says Ayer with a reference again to Moore's theory, "why it is impossible to find a criterion for determining the validity of ethical judgments. It is not because they have an *absolute* validity which is mysteriously independent of ordinary sense experience [namely, Moore's intuition of his non-natural entity *good*], but because

they have no objective validity whatsoever." They are unverifiable. They are scientifically and cognitively meaningless.

It follows that a pair of emotive judgments cannot ever literally contradict each other. If I approve something, and you don't, there is no logical contradiction. Simply our approvals differ. It follows further, says Ayer, that there is no rational disputing about morals. "For we hold," says he, "that one really never does dispute about questions of value." He admits that if people have been similarly brought up in a common cultural environment, they will tend to agree in their ethical judgments. But this has nothing to do with argument. "It is because argument fails us when we come to deal with pure questions of value," he says, "that we finally resort to mere abuse." [5]

Examination of Ayer's Analysis

This is undoubtedly the most skeptical ethical theory ever propounded. Not that *that* need be anything against it. This may be what ethics boils down to. But never before had it been maintained that ethical judgments are immune to every sort of cognitive appeal—not only to verification, evidence, probability or intuitive certainty, but even to faith or doubt. The value judgment theory has lifted values completely out of the realm of cognition. This feat, moreover, was performed very simply—just by analyzing ethical sentences and comparing them with the descriptive sentences of science. Ayer's critics can hardly believe it—can hardly believe that an act of linguistic analysis can perform so far-reaching an effect. They suspect some legerdemain.

So let us examine Ayer's treatment carefully, and see if his analysis of moral values has not slipped somewhere.

First, let us ask if his argument depends upon Moore's presentation of the naturalistic fallacy. For if it does, his treatment can be very easily disposed of in the manner in which we saw Moore's argument could be. Moore's conclusions come from his

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

playing on the ambiguities of the word "good." He found the full meaning of "good" could not be identified with a reference to any suggested natural object. By natural object he meant anything that could be a datum or subject matter for a descriptive science, such objects as pleasure or desire (which are data for psychology), or social approval and law and custom (which are subject matter for sociology), or life and survival (which are subject matter for biology).

If the meaning of good was identified with any one of these, it was always possible to find another meaning in accepted usage for "good" by which one could say that "good is bad"—as, for instance, that pleasure is bad, when a hedonist takes pleasure as the meaning of good. From this linguistic analysis of the meaning of the word "good" together with the assumption that the word must have a unique object of reference for its full meaning, Moore concluded that there must be a non-natural quality good and that it can be known by an act of intellectual intuition. We found that Moore's argument was easily met by simply accepting the analysis of the meaning of "good" as indeed ambiguous, and by refraining from an insistence that an ambiguous word must require the existence of a unique object to fulfill its meaning.

Now, Ayer's argument does not depend on the ambiguity of the word "good." He abandons Moore's argument the moment he refuses to accept Moore's conclusion that there must be a unique non-natural object good, known by an intuition. The naturalistic fallacy does remain for Ayer but is arrived at by quite a different mode of linguistic analysis from Moore's. It is possible that Moore's linguistic treatment suggested Ayer's but the two men start from a different base. Moore's ethical theory arises from an analysis of ethical *words* and their usage; Ayer's theory arises from an analysis of *sentences* containing ethical terms.

There are two types of linguistic value theories. There is Moore's type, carried on by Ross, Ewing, and others, which analyzes words and ends in a form of intuitionism. This may be

called the intuitive linguistic school. And there is Ayer's type which analyzes sentences and has come to be known as the value judgment school. The value judgment school does not depend for its conclusions in any way upon the linguistic analyses of the intuitive school. The two schools agree about the naturalistic fallacy and its consequences, and that is about all. As Ayer himself says, he agrees with Moore about this fallacy but for a quite different reason.

So we must take Ayer's argument as a fresh start, and see how he reaches his conclusions and how far these conclusions may be acceptable.

Ayer's point of departure, we saw, is the examination of the types of sentences that appear in books presenting systems of ethics. This is a process of empirical observation. In their point of departure, therefore, the value judgment school gives the appearance of being a school of empiricists in ethics.

Ayer finds four types of sentences. The first two (definitions of ethical terms and descriptions of moral experiences) he passes over as having no normative significance. The third type, exhortations and other emotive expressions, are linguistically neither true nor false and so, for him, have no cognitive significance. The fourth group consisting of declarative sentences containing ethical terms is the only one that contains what he regards as normative ethical judgments. He subjects these to analysis and concludes that they are really non-cognitive expressions that belong to the third group. The result is that there do not exist for him any ethical sentences with cognitive significance. Value judgments are emotional expressions of various sorts, none of them either true or false.

The result is that, for instance, he identifies an ethical judgment in the declarative form "Stealing is wrong" with the imperative form "Don't steal." The imperative form is the correct form. His argument for making this identification is that the word "wrong" does not add any information about the act of stealing. It simply gives an emotional tone to the utterance. The utterance is consequently not a descriptive sentence but an

emotional expression, neither true nor false. And the proper linguistic form for it is an imperative—or, as the circumstances may suggest, an optative or an expletive or what else is suitable other than a declarative.

For the moment, let us accept Ayer's analysis and see just what he has done, and how far his conclusions may be justified.

In identifying an ethical judgment with imperatives and other such sentences which are neither true nor false, he has implicitly defined the subject matter of ethics. The question arises, just what is this subject matter? Ayer refers to these expressions (imperatives and such) as emotive expressions and also as linguistic forms. The linguistic forms are clear enough to see—the various forms of the imperative, optative and the like which can be symbolized on paper and empirically examined. Observation of these linguistic forms show they have no descriptive references by which they can be called true or false.

But what are the emotions which Ayer says they express? Ayer is vague about these. They seem to extend all the way from pain and aversion ("Ouch!" "Get away!") and pleasure and pleasurable wishes ("Umm!" "Ah!" and "Would that I could enjoy this!") through personal commands and requests ("Shut the window, please!") to social approval and institutional pressure ("Keep your contracts!" "Don't steal!"). Now, these pains and pleasures, desires, anticipations, aversions, commands, approvals and the like are occurrences. They are facts of human behavior and experience. As occurrences, of course, these also are neither true nor false.

There is, however, a great difference between the reason why an imperative (or other such linguistic forms) is neither true nor false, and why a factual occurrence is neither true nor false. The imperative form, by definition, can never be turned into the declarative form. One can describe the imperative form in declarative sentences, as Ayer does in showing that imperatives are not characterized by being true or false. But the imperative linguistic form itself cannot turn into a declarative and become true or false. On the other hand, factual occurrences are just the

things declarative sentences describe and are what verify declarative sentences and render them true or false. That is to say, imperative sentences by their form have no relevancy to cognition or matters of truth and falsity. But occurrent facts have intimate relevancy with cognition and are just what verify declarative sentences.

So now, we see, it becomes very important to know just how Ayer is defining the subject matter of ethics when he identifies ethical judgments with commands, imperatives, and the like. Is he defining the field of ethics as that of linguistic imperatives (and the like) or the dynamic emotive behavior that frequently manifests itself in imperative (and other) linguistic forms? If the former, he turns ethics into a branch of linguistics: namely, the study of those forms of sentences which are neither true nor false. But in doing this Ayer would lose contact with the usage of the term "ethics" and its traditional concern with dynamic human conduct. If, however, he accepts the other alternative and defines the subject matter of ethics as types of emotive behavior often expressed in imperative gestures and words, he becomes an ethical empiricist capable of giving descriptions of these facts —declarative sentences, true or false. But then he abandons the characteristic tenet of his school which is that value judgments are neither true nor false.

Here I think we discover the source of Ayer's legerdemain. His description of an imperative as an emotive expression conceals an ambiguity. As a linguistic form, it is neither true nor false, since it has no descriptive reference to matters of fact. As an emotive expression, it is likewise neither true nor false, but for a very different reason, for the reason that it is itself an occurrent fact. As an occurrent fact, of course, it is just what cognition attaches to, and what declarative sentences, true or false, are made about.

Ayer and the value judgment school can thus slip back and forth from the imperative linguistic form which is neither true nor false to the emotive factual occurrence it often expresses which is also neither true nor false. If a critic should begin to

corner him with the emotive occurrences pointing out that these can be easily described in declarative sentences, Ayer can quickly call attention to the imperative linguistic forms with which he has identified ethical judgments and which cannot have truth references. If, on the other hand, a critic points out that matters of dynamic human conduct just cannot be identified with static linguistic forms, he can quickly call attention to his view that these forms are the expressions of just exactly such dynamic emotional elements of human conduct.

Yet clearly Ayer cannot have it both ways at once. He cannot say that descriptions of emotive behavior are irrelevant to imperative expressions if he also says that imperatives are emotive expressions. For if imperatives are emotive expressions, they are bound to be controlled by the laws of emotive behavior which are open to description in declarative sentences true or false. On the other hand, if he wants to stick to the idea of imperatives as pure linguistic forms, he must hold that emotive behavior is irrelevant to these forms—that is, he must hold that an imperative form is not an actual emotive expression. On this issue he straddles and refuses to take a clear stand, which is just what makes his view so plausible, so paradoxical, and so impossible.

The terminal position he tries to maintain is thus an unjustifiable one and one that stands up only by means of an arbitrary stipulated definition of Ayer's own making. For he unmistakably defines the field of ethical judgments as that of linguistic imperatives (and the like). This automatically by definition makes an empirical descriptive ethics impossible. But at the same time he maintains that these imperatives are emotive expressions. Then when descriptions are given of emotive expressions, he says these are not ethical judgments because they are not linguistic imperatives. They are declarative statements, true or false, and belong to psychology, anthropology, sociology, or some other descriptive science but not to ethics. Thus by means of an arbitrary stipulated definition he attains for his theory the same immunity from adverse empirical evidence and criti-

cism that men like Moore whom he calls "absolutists" obtain by appeals to intuition or an a priori.

Kant thought that a scientific treatment of ethical norms was impossible, as we saw, and projected ethical judgments out of the natural world into the noumenal sphere. Ayer and his school have, as it turns out, been following a similar procedure and have projected ethical judgments into a sphere of linguistic forms for which not only the methods of science but truth and falsity themselves, and even faith, are regarded as irrelevant.

As we follow further into this linguistic approach, we should keep our critical eye open to see if the ambiguity, inner contradiction, and arbitrariness of Ayer's analysis can be made to dissolve in the analyses of his successors. In summary, let me list these difficulties in Ayer's analysis. They are the following:

1. There is, first, the ambiguity that appears in Ayer's analysis of an ethical judgment as a non-declarative sentence and also as an expression of emotion. The one is a grammatical form with no cognitive significance. The other is a natural occurrence in human experience and behavior which is fully open to cognitive description and hypothesis. Both are neither true nor false, but for entirely different reasons. In addition the grammatical form often occurs like a feature, or a superficial part, of an emotional response. The two can be easily confused. Ayer makes no effort to discriminate them.

2. The inner contradiction lies in the treatment of an ethical judgment as both a grammatical form such as an imperative which has no cognitive significance and as an emotional expression which being a describable occurrence is full of cognitive significance.

3. The arbitrary element comes from Ayer's stipulation that an ethical judgment be defined as a non-declarative sentence, so that by definition descriptions of emotional expressions are ruled out from being ethical judgments. Not that Ayer explicitly makes this stipulation, but by disposing of all sentences concerned with the description of emotions and their effects as merely psychological and consequently as not ethical, the stipu-

lation becomes apparent. Thus by a *definitional stipulation* his ethical theory becomes as dogmatic as any of the intuitional or a priori ones.

In the end this last difficulty is likely to be the insurmountable one. For an empirical moralist asks students to hold out the possibility that ethical norms effective in regulating conduct may be discovered, described, and verified.

Charles Stevenson's Analysis

Stevenson's *Ethics and Language* was the first really systematic development of the value judgment theory and will probably go down in the history of ethics as the most representative for this school. Later writers make so many concessions to empirical considerations that the issue over value judgments versus descriptive judgments loses most of its significance. And finally with the advent of the so-called analytical school of philosophers attention shifts so far from practical matters of conduct and decision that the issue almost disappears.

For these latter men are completely absorbed in the linguistic "behavior" of terms and phrases and the "jobs" words do. Such analyses of ethical expressions are highly informative of the subtleties of normative intercourse. But about all that is left of the fighting issue raised by Ayer over value judgments is a settled assumption that "logically" (by which the analysts mean linguistically) a distinction does have to be kept between prescriptions and descriptions.

But in Stevenson's book the issue is still hot. Here is a systematization of the tenets of the value judgment theory written while the theory was still felt to have plenty of vital significance in directing men's reasoning and behavior in practical matters. In an introduction to a new edition of *Language, Truth, and Logic,* Ayer comments favorably in a footnote on Stevenson's mode of analysis, which may accordingly be reasonably regarded as an expansion of Ayer's view clarified, rectified, and systematized.

Stevenson opens his analysis by calling attention to the difference between disagreements in belief and disagreements in attitude. The former are characteristic of science and are settled by the presentation of additional evidence and further information on the subject. The latter cannot always be settled in this way, for what is here required for agreement is a change of attitude. "The two kinds of disagreement differ mainly in this respect," writes Stevenson, "the former is concerned with how matters are truthfully to be described and explained; the latter is concerned with how they are to be favored or disfavored." [6]

This distinction between disagreements in belief and in attitude leads to the distinction made by Ayer between scientific and ethical judgments. The latter Stevenson finds, like Ayer, are something in the nature of imperatives. Stevenson proceeds to offer "working models" for sentences containing ethical terms, serving to define the terms. He introduces these working models with the following remarks: "On account of this similar function of imperative and ethical sentences, it will be useful to consider some definitions that *in part* identify them. These definitions will not be adequate to the subtleties of common usage; they will be markedly inaccurate. But they will preserve in rough form much that is essential to ethical analysis." [7]

Stevenson gives two types of working models, which he calls the *first pattern* and the *second pattern.* In the first pattern all the essential principles of his analysis are brought out. So, we can concentrate our attention mainly on this. In the first pattern he presents the following three definitions:

1. "This is wrong" means *I disapprove of this; do so as well.*
2. "He ought to do this" means *I disapprove of his leaving this undone; do so as well.*
3. "This is good" means *I approve of this; do so as well.*[8]

[6] *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1944), p. 4.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

We have here a great improvement in precision over Ayer's analysis. An ethical judgment is exhibited as a combination of a declarative statement referring to a state of mind of the speaker that can be psychologically described, together with an imperative expression demanding that the person spoken to acquire the same state of mind.

Ayer's ambiguity as to whether an ethical judgment was an emotional expression or a grammatical form is here recognized, and, at first glance, clarified. An emotional element is placed in the first clause of this working model, and an imperative form is placed in the second. And it seems to be suggested that the imperative form is a verbal utterance brought about by the factual presence of the emotive element. But actually, as will soon appear, Ayer's difficulties still crop up.

Stevenson is, however, precise in his designation of what the emotive element is that starts off the ethical judgment. It is not *any* kind of emotion. It is specifically an attitude of approval or disapproval of something. It is a kind of wanting with a reference to what is wanted, to what is favored or disfavored.

Stevenson also recognizes that this emotive element in the ethical judgment falls within the scientific field. "It will be noted," he writes, "that the definiens in each case has two parts: first a declarative statement, 'I approve' or 'I disapprove,' which describes the attitudes of the speaker, and secondly an imperative statement, 'do so as well,' which is addressed to changing or intensifying the attitudes of the hearer." [9]

Specifying this relationship still further he writes: "In . . . first-pattern contexts, the descriptive meaning of a judgment will be taken to refer to the speaker's attitudes *at the time of speaking,* even though the word is not in the present tense. Thus 'King John *was* bad' becomes, descriptively, not 'I disapprov*ed* of King John,' but rather 'I *now* disapprove of King John, who once exist*ed.*' " [10] He provides for some exceptions to this rule. But for us the important matter is that he gives an

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 22.
[10] *Ibid.,* p. 93.

emotional element in a value judgment a specific *descriptive* status.

Another big improvement in Stevenson's analysis consists in showing that ethical discussions may be profitable and that to a considerable extent they proceed along rational scientific lines. The only thing is—and it is quite a thing—that the aim of an ethical discussion is not to find out the truth about the rightness of an action, but solely to persuade a man to accept one's attitude. Still, it is a great advance over Ayer's dictum that "one really never does dispute about questions of value."

Stevenson's book is largely occupied with the nature of such ethical discussion and the ways by which agreement of attitude may be sought. The inducements for agreement he calls *reasons*. And here emerges a new conception of the function of moral discourse. We might call it the *ethics of reasons*. It is in marked contrast with discussions in the traditional ethical schools (whether empirical or intuitive or a priori), which sought dynamic or rational *sanctions* for their criteria of conduct, such as the human desire for happiness or the certainty of conscience. In the value judgment school where ethics is concerned with linguistic imperatives of some sort, there is obviously no occasion for trying to find rational or empirical sanctions. For the linguistic imperative is neither true nor false. So, a value judgment theory does not try to find sanctions for the truth or basic authority of its imperatives, but it does try to give reasons for a man's accepting them. In other words, a value judgment theory does not look for *true* criteria for the guidance of human conduct. This, it holds, is impossible. But it may seek *reasons* to persuade men to agree with a person's own attitudes about conduct.

These persuasive reasons may be of two kinds: rational and non-rational. Stevenson gives an illuminating analysis with many illustrations of types of reasons of both these kinds.

The rational reasons are such as to show some inconsistency in the other person's beliefs or a failure to notice some relevant evidence or to notice the full consequences of a proposed act

and such like. Person *A*, for instance, says, "It is always wrong to break a promise," to which *B* replies, "You speak without thinking. There are many cases of that sort which you regard without the least disapproval." Here *A* brings out an inconsistency in *B*'s reasons. Or again, *A* may have said, "Their friends are all of them shamelessly immoral," to which *B* replies, "Not knowing them, you should not generalize so sweepingly," and *A* answers, "I know a great number of them, such as *C* and *D* and *E*—and their immorality gives my judgment no little support." Here *A* produces evidence *B* was not aware of. Or again, *A* remarks, "The proposed bill is on the whole bad," and *B* answers, "I know little about it but incline to favor it on the ground that higher taxes are preferable to further borrowing," to which *A* replies, "It includes a sales tax which will put a great burden on the poor and make little difference to the rich," and *B* answers, "I had not realized that; I must study the bill more carefully." Here *A* points out consequences *B* had not noticed. Or again, *A* observes, "*C*'s courtesy to his elder friend is admirable," and *B* rejoins, "Perhaps you would speak with less assurance if you knew how anxious he is to have that elderly friend take him into his business," which surprises *A* who says, "Yes, that puts the matter in another light." [11] Here *B* points out a motive of *C*'s which *A* did not know about.

In all these instances, an attitude is changed and action redirected by pointing out errors in belief where the belief was supporting the attitude. These are all rational reasons which any empirical moralist would respect. If one sets a value on something, and then one finds that this valuing is based on beliefs of his that are shown to be inconsistent with other beliefs of his, or are just plain false, he will be strongly inclined to change his belief and his valuing of the object.

But sometimes these rational methods fail to change a man's attitude or are somehow not applicable. Then resort is had to the non-rational methods. These depend "on the sheer, direct emotional impact of words—on emotive meaning, rhetorical

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 111–138.

cadence, apt metaphor, stentorian, stimulating, or pleading tones of voice, dramatic gestures, care in establishing *rapport* with the hearer or audience and so on. . . . A redirection of the hearer's attitudes is sought not by the mediating step of altering his beliefs, but by *exhortation,* whether obvious or subtle, crude or refined." [12] We are all well acquainted with persuasive reasons of this sort. One of Stevenson's examples will illustrate the whole group. An annoyed *A* states, "He had no right to act without consulting us," and *B* points out, "After all, he is the chairman," to which *A* retorts, "Yes, but not the dictator. He violated democratic procedure." [13] *A* is trying to change *B*'s attitude by arousing *B*'s democratic loyalties and his hostility to dictatorships. In this instance, there is supposedly no rational connection between the committee chairman's action and a dictatorship, but there is some emotional connection which *A* is exploiting as a persuasive reason to bring *B* over to his way of feeling.

Stevenson's second pattern is formulated thus: " 'This is good' has the meaning of 'This has qualities or relations *X, Y, Z* . . .' except that 'good' has as well a laudatory emotive meaning which permits it to express the speaker's approval, and tends to evoke the approval of the hearer." [14]

As Stevenson points out, "The second pattern differs from the first in its external aspects alone." It could be presented in a form that closely parallels the third definition of the first pattern:

"This is good" means *This has the characters* X, Y, Z, *which are highly approved; do so as well.*

What is approved is essentially a descriptive definition, such as any empirical moralist sets up as his basic ethical criterion. This definition can be supported by both rational and nonrational reasons to bring about agreement of attitude. For in-

[12] *Ibid.,* pp. 139–140.
[13] *Ibid.,* p. 141.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 207.

stance, an illustration used by Stevenson is Plato's definition of justice. For Plato good can be descriptively defined as the fulfillment and harmonious interaction of the essential functions of the state. This definition is presented in a laudatory tone by Plato in his *Republic* and the reader is gently though persistently urged to agree with Plato that this is indeed the "real" and "true" definition of good. Plato's argument is, on Stevenson's interpretation, a succession of persuasive reasons designed to make the reader's attitude toward the definition agree with Plato's. Some of these reasons are rational, but some are emotive and non-rational.

So far we have been examining only the first clause of Stevenson's patterns where he is describing an attitude and what the attitude is about, and the reasons given in connection with that attitude. There would not be much here that an empirical moralist would take exception to. In describing the attitude of approval Stevenson is making declarative sentences (true or false) about this attitude and the object toward which it is directed. He is doing just what any empirical moralist would do in developing an ethical theory. And in so far as the reasons are rational, they would be just such reasons as an empirical moralist would give in support of his theory.

But what about the second clause: "do so as well"? Here the difficulty breaks out. It is the same difficulty that we found in Ayer. This is an imperative and it has an emotive thrust of its own over and above the attitude of favor or disfavor described in the first clause. As a linguistic *form* it is neither true nor false. But it is also an act of exhortation. As an *act* of the speaker, as a factual occurrence, it is not true nor false either. But the reasons why this verbal form and this act of exhortation are neither true nor false are not the same in the two cases. If the clause is taken as a mere linguistic form, it is not ethically very important—just one of various forms of speech that does not have a truth reference. But if it is taken as an act of exhortation with a conative drive behind it, then it is a fact of human conation that can be *described* in declarative sentences true or false and is the

sort of fact with which empirical ethics has been much concerned. But on this second interpretation, an empirical moralist would want to know not only the true description of the act, but also true descriptions of its closely related motives, its consequences, and the situation out of which it arose. With these data the act could be fitted into an empirical theory of ethics.

But Stevenson sticks to the linguistic form and its strictly verbal content which merely requires the reader (or whoever is the object of the imperative) to bring his attitude into agreement with the speaker's. He does not let the speaker's act extend into its own context of motive and consequences and social situation but holds it within the content of the linguistic form. Nor does he let the live act come free from the linguistic form so that he can attend to the form alone. He keeps just enough of the live act attached to the linguistic form, so that the unwary reader is blocked from following out to completion either the linguistic or the factual interpretation of the expression. By this mode of handling the imperative form, Stevenson apparently removes ethics from the sphere of empirical description.

As with Ayer, this is done actually by an arbitrary definition which stipulates that ethical sentences are pivoted on an imperative form, and so cannot be true or false. This is, of course, just what Stevenson is doing with his three definitions in the first pattern and the schematic definition of his second pattern. These are forms for defining empirical ethics out of existence.

But Stevenson does not do this quite so brusquely as did Ayer and the impact of his equally arbitrary stipulations is lessened. Stevenson allows for a lot of description in the first clause of his patterns and for a lot of rational argument connecting the first with the second clause toward directing the hearer's attitude into an agreement with the speaker's.

The big difference from an empirical approach, however, shows up in Stevenson's over-all treatment of these reasons. Their ethical function is persuasive only. Even the rational reasons have no further functions than to change the hearer's attitude to agree with the speaker's. The reasons are not for ra-

tional purposes of guidance toward true criteria of conduct to determine what acts are truly right or wrong. They are solely for propaganda purposes of persuading the hearer to the speaker's way of feeling. They are emotive. Morality is a species of propaganda.

Stevenson is, to his credit, very frank about this. He has a chapter on the subject. Nevertheless, his ethics has moved a long way from Ayer's toward a recognition of some relevancy of descriptive statements.

His main advances can be summarized thus:

1. An ethical judgment is complex and contains a descriptive component and an imperative component.

2. The descriptive component includes a description of a psychological attitude of favor or disfavor and of the object of that attitude.

3. Reasons are ethically relevant to persuade a hearer to agree in attitude with the speaker. These are all propaganda reasons, and many are non-rational, but many are rational and permit genuine relevant rational discussions of ethical issues.

But the three difficulties enumerated for Ayer's ethics still hold for the imperative component of Stevenson's ethics.

R. M. Hare's Analysis

Hare's book *The Language of Morals* represents the sort of development in the linguistic school that follows Stevenson's systematization summarized in the previous section. Hare is troubled about Stevenson's amalgamation of moral discussion with propaganda. He wishes to defend "the rationality of moral discourse."

Ayer, we recall, is not concerned to find moral judgments rational. He identifies moral judgments with linguistic emotional expressions of various kinds. Since such statements are neither true nor false, he is willing to regard them even as meaningless in the sense that they can not be verified. Stevenson undertakes to show that reasons for emotive judgments can be given

and debated so far as the emotive attitudes expressed by these judgments are susceptible to change by persuasive means. If the attitudes depend on beliefs, they can often be changed by rational arguments showing the falseness or dubiousness of the beliefs. A certain amount of rational discussion thus becomes ethically relevant. But the aim is persuasion only, and rational persuasion is not in its basic moral function any different from irrational persuasion.

Hare finds this treatment unsatisfactory and wishes to set moral discourse firmly on a rational basis, without, however, abandoning the idea that moral judgments are neither true nor false.

Hare's objection to Stevenson's proposed solution is worth quoting to show the difficulties the linguistic school recognizes in their own ways of handling ethical problems:

> The suggestion, that the function of moral judgments was to persuade, led to a difficulty in distinguishing their functions from that of propaganda. . . . It does not matter whether the means used to persuade are fair or foul, so long as they do persuade. And therefore the natural reaction to the realization that someone is trying to persuade us is "He's trying to get at me; I must be on my guard; I mustn't let him bias my decision unfairly; I must be careful to make up my own mind in the matter and remain a free responsible agent." Such a reaction to moral judgments should not be encouraged by philosophers. . . . Persuasion is not directed to a person as a rational agent, who is asking himself (or us) "What shall I do?"; it is not an answer to this or any other question; it is an attempt to *make* him answer in a particular way.[15]

For Hare the ethical problem centers on the question "What shall I do?" And he does not regard an act of persuasion as an answer to that question. So, he cannot accept Stevenson's analysis as an adequate answer. The answer must be a rational one in some sense similar to the rational answer expected by a scientist to the question "What is the case?" But Hare believes

[15] R. M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 14–15.

the answer cannot be a scientific one presenting evidence for the truth of a statement describing an actual case. For Hare like his predecessors is convinced that ethical judgments are neither true nor false. They are for him definitely imperatives of a kind. When a man in an ethical quandary asks "What shall I do?" he expects to be told what to do. "Commands," writes Hare, "however much they may differ from [declarative] statements, are like them in this, that they consist in telling someone something, not in seeking to influence him." Then laying out his program he says: "For, as I shall show, commands, because they, like [declarative] statements, are essentially intended for answering questions asked by rational agents, are governed by logical rules just as [declarative] statements are. And this means that moral judgments may also be so governed." [16]

The rationality he expects to find in the domain of imperatives is a logic of imperatives governed by rules comparable to the syllogistic rules of formal logic, by which imperative conclusions can be validly reached. Such conclusions validly deduced, he believes will furnish the rational answer a man wants to be told when he asks in a quandary "What shall I do?"

The logic of imperatives covers a wide domain of practical matters of which moral imperatives are only a part. But it is the same logic throughout. The form of it is a sort of syllogism with an imperative major premise, an indicative minor premise, and an imperative conclusion. Here is an example (giving a simple practical conclusion, not really a moral one in Hare's terms):

Take all the boxes to the station.
This is one of the boxes.
Therefore: Take this to the station.

Two rules can at once be made about this form:

1. No indicative conclusion can be validly drawn from a set of premises which cannot be validly drawn from the indicatives among them alone.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

2. No imperative conclusion can be validly drawn from a set of premises which does not contain at least one imperative.[17]

The second rule is the important one. For it leads in Hare's analysis to the following conclusion: "If we admit, as I shall later maintain, that it must be part of the function of a moral judgment to prescribe or guide choices, that is to say, to entail an answer to some question in the form 'What shall I do?'—then it is clear, from the second of the rules just stated, that no moral judgment can be a pure statement of fact." [18]

Here Hare appears to gain by a sort of deductive process the basic tenet of the linguistic school—namely, that a declarative statement (which may be true) cannot be derived from an imperative (which is neither true nor false). Hence, on this point he agrees with Ayer and Stevenson that any ethics which seeks to produce moral judgments that are true is misconceived and impossible. This holds for the empirical views examined in our earlier chapters and the rational views examined in the previous chapter. Hare concedes

> The upshot of all this is rather alarming. I gave . . . reasons for holding that no moral system whose principles were regarded as purely factual could fulfil its function of regulating our conduct. [And] I have shown that no moral system which claims to be based on principles that are self-evident can fulfil this function either. These two contentions between them, if they are accepted, dispose of nearly all of what Hume calls 'the vulgar systems of morality.' . . . It is not surprising that the first effect of modern logical researches was to make some philosophers despair of morals as a rational activity.

He adds, "It is the purpose of this book to show that their despair was premature." [19]

Hare's way out is by way of the logic of imperatives yielding valid (and so rational) imperative conclusions.

Let us go over his argument up to this point.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

1. He declares that the moral problem is that of finding answers to questions in the form "What shall I do?"

2. He says the answers to such questions must be such as would regulate and guide the action of the person asking the questions.

3. These must be answers such as a rational person asking the questions would regard as rational answers. Such a person wants to be told something. He will accordingly be on his guard against propaganda which does not tell him anything but tries to make him do something.

4. Such rational answers cannot be declarative or indicative statements of fact, for these only furnish information (as true as can be given) but cannot furnish guidance or regulation of action.

5. Hence, the answers must be of the prescriptive or imperative type, which tell a person what to do by prescribing the proper actions.

6. The proper imperative can be found by way of the logic of imperatives through the deduction of a valid conclusion from the premises of an imperative syllogism.

There still remains to complete his argument some account of where the premises come from. There is no problem, of course, about the minor premise. That is some matter of fact relevant to the major premise given in a declarative statement presumably true. In the example offered above, "This is one of the boxes" is such a declarative statement. The big problem is how one comes by the imperative major premise.

Here Hare makes an admission or qualification which can reach quite far into his system of imperatives. He distinguishes between hypothetical and nonhypothetical imperatives (an echo from Kant, which Hare would quite surely not deny). In the case of a hypothetical imperative, "there is a kind of imperative conclusion which can be entailed by a set of purely indicative premises." [20] As an example, he gives:

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

If you want to go to the largest grocer in Oxford, go to Grimbly Hughes.

In this hypothetical sentence, the "if" clause stands for the major premise of a syllogism, the final clause for the conclusion, and a minor premise, "Grimbly Hughes is the largest grocer in Oxford," is understood.

Generally hypothetical imperatives are regarded as concerned with acts having to do with the relation of means to end, or with acts of prudence and social policy having to do with the causal consequences of a proposed act. In both instances causal relations are involved, and these are matters of fact. So, a hypothetical imperative is in a way describing matter of fact relations. For example, the hypothetical imperative "If you want your car to run, put in gasoline" is a statement of a causal and means-end relationship. And "If you want your teeth to last, go regularly to the dentist" is a statement of causal consequences for a matter of simple prudence.

Kant was very clear about such hypothetical imperatives. They were all non-moral for him and they covered all imperatives except his ultimate categorical imperative. Hare does not seem to be so clear. "We must not assume," he says, "that all non-moral imperatives are hypothetical, for this is far from being true." [21] But it is evident that for Hare as well as for Kant moral imperatives are not hypothetical. The trouble with the hypothetical imperative is that it is so saturated with factual material that the imperative seems to get subordinated to the declarative statements of fact. Yet there is an imperative force there. Hare finally says, "The best way of describing the matter has been suggested by Kant: the imperative element in an hypothetical imperative is analytic ('Who wills the end . . . wills also the means'), because the imperatives in the two parts, so to say, cancel one another out." [22]

I shall want to comment on this solution of Hare's later. But

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

let us only note at this point that this is Hare's way of disposing of the hypothetical imperative. For our present study, what we want to know is what, for Hare, constitutes a moral imperative. We know it is nonhypothetical.

In practice, when a person asks "What shall I do?" and somebody prescribes an answer, the person is likely to ask for the *reason* for the prescription. The reason on Hare's view will be the premises of the imperative syllogism and particularly the major premise. For Hare the major premise is the moral *principle* on which the prescribed act of conduct is based. The minor premise, of course, is the statement of fact which brings the principle into action. It is the reason why the principle is applicable at that time.

Suppose the problem is what to say to a man who has just been diagnosed as a case of incurable cancer. The physician is asking himself or another "What shall I do?" The most obvious prescription is "Tell him the truth" or "Don't tell him a lie." If the physician asks the reason, the reply will be a reference to the moral principle "Never tell a lie," or, better, "One ought not to tell a lie," and to the fact that giving the patient the impression that he does not have cancer would in this case as a matter of actual fact be telling a lie. Therefore, in this actual case, tell the patient the truth. Don't lie to the patient.

However, the physician is the one that has to perform the act. Consequently, it is the physician's *decision*. Hare makes a great deal of this point. It is not a moral act unless it is an act of conduct in which a person makes his own decision. Such an act of decision is, of course, a fact and as a fact neither true nor false. But in order for the physician to make his own decision he must make it on some principle. "All decisions," writes Hare, "except those, if any, that are completely arbitrary are to some extent decisions of principle." [23] Moral decisions would be definitely decisions of principle. Now, for the physician to make this decision and tell the patient the truth, he must *subscribe* to the principle.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

What can lead him to *subscribe* to a principle?

Hare observes that there are some theories which stress the effects of an act and regard principles as a generalization of some sort from the effects, or, at least, subordinate to the effects. And he cites utilitarianism as such a theory. There are others which stress principles to the neglect of effects. Most intuitional and formalistic theories do this, and Hare might have cited particularly Kant. Hare believes he makes the proper balance between these two extremes. I will quote the following passage at length, for it reveals the breadth of rationality he believes he attains by his conception of a prescriptive ethics:

> The truth is that, if asked to justify as completely as possible any decision, we have to bring in both effects—to give content to the decision—and principles, and the effects in general of observing those principles, and so on, until we have satisfied our inquirer. Thus a complete justification of a decision would consist of a complete account of its effects together with a complete account of the principles which it observed, and the effects of observing those principles—for, of course, it is the effects (what obeying them in fact consists in) which gives content to the principles too. Thus, if pressed to justify a decision completely, we have to give a complete specification of the way of life of which it is a part. This complete specification it is impossible in practice to give; the nearest attempts are those given by the great religions, especially those which can point to historical persons who carried out the way of life in practice. Suppose, however, that we can give it. If the inquirer still goes on asking "But why *should* I live like that?", then there is no further answer to give him, because we have already, *ex hypothesi,* said everything that could be included in this further answer. We can only ask him to make up his own mind which way he ought to live; for in the end everything rests upon such a decision of principle. He has to decide whether to accept that way of life or not; if he accepts it, then he can proceed to justify the decisions that are based upon it; if he does not accept it, then let him accept some other and try to live by it. The sting is in the last clause. To describe such ultimate decisions as arbitrary, because *ex hypothesi* everything which could be used to justify them has already been included in the decision, would be like saying that

a complete description of the universe was utterly unfounded, because no further fact could be called upon in corroboration of it. This is not how we use the words 'arbitrary' and 'unfounded.' Far from being arbitrary, such a decision would be the most well-founded of decisions, because it would be based upon a consideration of everything upon which it could possibly be founded." [24]

So principles are developed in consideration of their effects and of other principles that may bear upon them. And in view of these considerations a principle may be modified. Thus the principle that "one ought to tell the truth" could be modified with certain principles of exceptions. For example, you need not tell the truth to a suggestible man when the *only* effect would be to shorten his life, nor to an enemy questioning you as a prisoner to gain information about your army, since in this case truthfulness conflicts with a supervening principle of loyalty to your nation's cause. Ultimately the justification of a prescription is the whole system of principles to which you subscribe and your capacity "to live by" this system in a world where acts do have effects that reflect back upon your principles and lead you to make proper adjustments. Decisions so made are not "arbitrary" but are well grounded and thoroughly rational.

One more point must be added for a full understanding of Hare's moral principles. This is a principle of principles that comes very close to Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative. If I interpret Hare correctly, it is judgments which respect this principle applying to ourselves and others that demonstrate the sphere of moral imperatives. Other prescriptions and imperatives not subordinate to this one lie outside the moral sphere. Here is a simple statement of this categorical principle which follows immediately after the long passage quoted above: "To ask whether I ought to do A in these circumstances is (to borrow Kantian language with a small but important modification) to ask whether or not I will that doing

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

A in such circumstances should become a universal law." [25] Another statement to the same effect is "I propose to say that the test, whether someone is using the judgment 'I ought to do X' as a value-judgment or not is, 'Does he or does he not recognize that if he assents to the judgment he must also assent to the command "Let me do X" '?" [26]

That is, if I make a value judgment it must be one that applies to everybody under similar circumstances. This last way of considering the moral imperative is particularly characteristic of Hare. If one says that "X is what A ought to do" then in exactly similar circumstances one must also say that "X is what B ought to do." "The complete universality of the moral judgment," Hare says, "means that we cannot 'get away from it'; and therefore its acceptance is a much more serious matter than the acceptance of an imperative from whose range of application we can escape," [27] such as hypothetical or other non-moral imperatives.

We can now complete the series of steps in Hare's argument summarized on page 300. What was missing were the steps showing where the premises of the imperative syllogism came from. Now we can add four more steps:

7. The minor premise is a factual statement indicating the nature of the actual occurrence which brings the major premise into action. And it is the *reason* why a decision has to be made.

8. The major premise is a principle to which a person *subscribes* and by subscribing makes a responsible decision expressed in the conclusion of the imperative syllogism. His subscribing to this principle constitutes the *rational reason* for his making the sort of decision he does.

9. A principle may be modified in terms of its effects and its consistency with other principles to which a person subscribes. "Thus a complete justification of a decision would consist of a complete account of its effects, together with a com-

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 168–169.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

plete account of the principles which it observed and the effects of observing the principles." This process culminates in a systematic way of life. When a man has decided on his way of life, then he must "try to live by it," which presumably means that the way of life itself is susceptible to modifications in terms of the actual effects that come from trying to live by it.

10. Lastly, there is a principle of principles to which a man must subscribe for all moral decisions. This is a sort of categorical imperative. It demands complete universality for a moral judgment to the effect that whatever decision a man makes, he must subscribe to the supreme principle that he would make the same decision for himself or any other man under exactly similar circumstances. This principle is frankly based by Hare on a definition.[28] It thus lacks the sort of systematic cogency the principles in steps 8 and 9 have. Strictly interpreted it is impossible to apply, since two exactly similar circumstances never occur. At least the times and places will be different, the persons involved will be different, and so on. Its purpose, however, is rather clear. It is to guarantee consideration of others on a level with oneself. Hare's way of developing his ethics in terms of an individual person's decisions might have a tendency to become egoistic, if he did not insist on this principle. It is perhaps his way of bridging the gap from an egoistic to a social sort of (dare I say?) utilitarianism underlying his system of prescriptions. It is interesting that he has to resort to an arbitrary prescriptive definition to do it.

These ten steps sufficiently present Hare's system, I believe, and the sequence of his argument. It is clearly a much richer, more rational, and more empirically saturated theory than either of the previous ones studied in this chapter. It could very easily be converted into a purely empirical theory. All that would be required would be the elimination of the definitional prescription in step 10, and of the assertion that value judgments are imperatives or prescriptions in step 5. We shall not concern ourselves further with the definitional prescription in step 10.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

That is a minor issue between the linguistic schools. The central issue between Hare and the empiricists is over his defining ethical judgments as imperatives or prescriptions.

Hare is adamant on that issue. Here is a typical passage quoted from the last pages of his book:

> I have said many times already that moral judgments cannot be merely statements of fact, and that if they were, they would not do the jobs that they do do, or have the logical characteristics that they do have. In other words, moral philosophers cannot have it both ways; either they must recognize the irreducibly prescriptive element in moral judgments, or else they must allow that moral judgments, as interpreted by them, do not guide actions in the way that, as ordinarily understood, they obviously do. . . . When I *subscribe* to the principle, I do not state a fact, but make a moral decision. . . . I am, in an important sense, making myself responsible for the judgment.[29]

Once more, as with Ayer and Stevenson, we must ask whether it is not true that the plausibility of Hare's position depends on the ambiguity in the term "imperative." On the one hand, as we have said, an imperative means a linguistic form which is neither true nor false. On the other hand, an imperative means an empirical fact, an act of demanding, which also, to be sure, is neither true nor false but for the quite different reason that it is that which verifies statements. As a fact, a living act, it is something which is described in declarative sentences true or false.

Now, the linguistic imperative form is what Hare uses in his imperative syllogism. But it is the imperative act he refers to when he speaks of a man's moral decision. If the former is what Hare wishes to consider as the subject matter of his ethics (and in one place he speaks of "ethics, as a special branch of logic"),[30] then he is indeed dealing with verbal forms that are neither true nor false. But then too he is not dealing with conduct as the living voluntary acts of men which has been the traditional

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 195–196.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

subject matter of ethics and moreover will continue to be a subject of great human interest whether it is called ethics or something else. If, however, the latter (namely, actual human decisions) are what Hare wishes to deal with, then his ethics will, as traditionally, be about actual human conduct, but it will be developed through descriptions (true or false) about these decisions and the effects and principles that come out of them. It will turn out to be an empirical ethics.

What Hare does, like other members of the linguistic school, is to play his reader back and forth between the linguistic form as an imperative and the factual decision as an imperative. If his ethics is threatened so far as human conduct is concerned with the emptiness of the study of linguistic forms, he calls attention to the vital acts of decision as the imperatives. And if he is threatened with an empirical treatment of human decisions by descriptions of their dynamic action and their motives and effects, he calls attention to the linguistic imperative form expressing a decision which is neither true nor false.

Let us look closely at the last quotation given above. Hare says that "moral judgments cannot be merely statements of fact." The reason is that the mere linguistic form of a descriptive statement cannot "do the job," and that means "guide actions," the way a moral judgment is supposed to do. Hence we "must recognize the irreducibly prescriptive element in moral judgments." But, of course, the mere *linguistic* form of an imperative cannot "guide actions" any more than the mere *linguistic* form of a declarative sentence describing relevant facts can. As linguistic forms both lack the dynamics for guiding actions. Hare sees this and shifts in the succeeding sentences to the factual imperative as an *act* of decision to subscribe to a principle. Such an act obviously does have the dynamics to guide action and to make prescriptive demands.

Here is a good instance of the way in which the ambiguity in the term *imperative* is used by the linguistic school. Hare, like the others, is of course not taking advantage of it consciously. But without it Hare's one strong empirical argument breaks

down—namely, that a declarative statement cannot guide an action while a prescription can. The linguistic declarative sentence on paper, of course, cannot guide action, but neither can the linguistic imperative sentence on paper. But the act of command, demand, or decision referred to by an imperative sentence can guide a decision. Likewise the act of command, demand, or decision *described by a declarative sentence* can. For it is the identical act and the descriptive declarative sentence is the preferable one to use in an ethical theory for it leads the student to observe the detailed dynamic character of the act, the context in which it occurs, its motives and its effects, and the mode of channeling provided by the hypothesis, or "principle," which guides the act toward the solution of the practical problem that instigated it. But the imperative sentence merely refers to the performance of the act, which it expresses; and, moreover, since it has no truth reference, it tends to block off further study and description of the act.

From a clear discrimination of this distinction between the imperative as a verbal form and the imperative as an act of conduct, it follows that if the linguistic school wishes to insist on denying to moral judgments any truth reference, they must *arbitrarily define* moral judgments as the linguistic forms of imperative sentences. This would be merely a nominal definitional stipulation as arbitrary as the devices of certainty employed by the intuitionists of the previous chapter. Meantime the facts of conduct as acts of decision will continue to be matters of crucial interest to men. And an empirical study of ethics leading to factually responsible *descriptive definitions* will surely continue to be carried on.

There is, however, another argument the linguistic moralists make, which empiricists cannot ignore. This is that ethical norms, and the normative judgments derived from these norms, cannot be found among natural facts; and that, therefore, a descriptive ethics is impossible. This is, be it observed, no argument in support of a linguistic theory of ethics. If a verifiable theory of normative ethics cannot be derived from certain de-

scriptions of natural facts, this is no argument for the soundness of a linguistic theory of ethics based on forms of sentences that are neither true nor false. To point out a difficulty in another theory does not establish the truth of your own. But the objection is a legitimate challenge to the empirical moralists. They are under the necessity of exhibiting describable and verifiable norms for ethical conduct among the facts of nature. Not that these facts must necessarily be physical facts, but they must be facts open to description and verification. This challenge will be met in the next and terminal chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 13

THE SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT THEORY

Retrospective View of the Theories Studied

WE ARE NOW in a position to take a comprehensive view of the total subject matter of ethics as this has come down to us in our cultural tradition. We first studied the principal theories of the great empirical schools—cultural relativity, hedonism, the social situation theory, the self-realization theory, and the theory of evolutionary ethics. These all agree in their method of approach to the ethical problem, which is that of seeking to discover norms of ethical value among factual materials according to the methods of the empirical sciences.

These theories are empirical hypotheses supported by evidences for the probability of the truth of the hypotheses. The hypotheses differ partly because they interpret or stress the evidences differently, but partly also because they select different sorts of evidence as most relevant to the ethical problem. As empirical hypotheses purporting to be probable only, they are all open to modification in terms of new evidence or new ways of relating the evidence. These theories are all descriptive hypotheses open to confirmation or verification and presented as probably true.[1]

[1] Since the completion of this manuscript, R. B. Brandt has presented in his new book *Ethical Theory* what he calls a "quasi-naturalist definition" of

We then examined a number of intuitive and formal theories. These also purport to be true. But they seek to establish their truth on grounds of certainty—on self-evidence, intuitive immediacy, or the a priori. We found this approach unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, but in general because there was such diversity of appeals to certainty all contrary to one another and there was no criterion to adjudicate among the various claims. The method itself proves dogmatic. Moreover, examined closely, the content of nearly all such theories turns out to be that of one or another of the empirical theories studied earlier. No new ethical subject matter seems to come out of the intuitive or a priori approach. It looks as if the authors were using this approach to block off criticism of their ethical con-

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ethical subject matter. As the phrase suggests, his theory lies halfway between a pure linguistic theory and a pure empirical view. As was earlier remarked, the linguistic theories from Ayer on have become successively richer and richer in empirical concessions. Brandt's view is the last step in this direction, actually spilling over into the empirical area. He even concedes that ethical statements are properly regarded as true or false. But he still clings to concern with ethical sentences rather than with acts of conduct, with the gulf between normative and descriptive sentences (even after dismissing Moore's naturalistic fallacy), and with "reasons" rather than with sanctions coming out of the nature of the case. So, I would still classify him as a linguist, though standing close to the threshold of ethical empiricism. I think the same criticisms that apply to Stevenson and Hare would also apply to him, but much more intricately and subtly.

His statement of his position is as follows: "The quasi-naturalist definition proposes that 'x is E' (where E is some ethical term) means the same as The E-corresponding attitude [which will be determined once we have specified the ethical term] to x satisfies all the conditions that would be set, as a general policy, for the endorsement of attitudes governing or appraising choices or actions, by anyone who was intelligent and factually informed and had thought through the problems of the possible general policies for the endorsement of such attitudes." (*Ethical Theory* p. 265). Notice that this definition pivots on the linguistic *sentence*, "x is E," but shifts through what he equates as the meaning of the sentence to the *attitudes* of intelligent and *factually* informed men. Is the subject-matter of ethics the sentences or the facts of conduct and sanctioned choice? If, as a naturalist, he really meant the facts, he would be no more deeply concerned with the sentences and terms of moral usage than a physicist with the popular usage of physical terms.

victions or artificially to claim certainty where their empirical evidence proved weak.

A somewhat similar conclusion seems to come out of our examination of the linguistic theories in the previous chapter. These also all agree on a method. It is a method which seeks to make ethical judgments ultimately inaccessible to descriptive or any other sort of cognitive treatment as possibly true or false. On our analysis this is achieved by an unwarranted acceptance of what this school calls the naturalistic fallacy, followed by an arbitrary definitional stipulation that ethical judgments are properly formulated as linguistic imperatives or other forms of speech that have no truth reference. The result is as dogmatic as that of the intuitive moralists. Nevertheless, the emphasis on subtle linguistic analyses of ethical terms and sentences has brought out a considerable amount of empirical material that can be profitably taken up in the more detailed development of any empirical ethical theory. By the very nature of the linguistic program, however, this school has made no contributions of importance toward the improvement of hypotheses descriptive of empirical ethical norms.

On our analysis, then, the main line of constructive endeavor in the ethical field lies in the empirical approach. Nothing substantial seems to come out of the intuitive and a priori method, and the linguistic method appears to be tangential and to be an evasion of the central human concern in ethics to discover cognitively reliable criteria for decisions of conduct.

The one pertinent question is that raised at the end of the previous chapter as to whether there is evidence for empirical norms among natural processes. It is my thesis that there is, and that the big schools of empirical ethics have been describing these norms. These consist of what I called in an early chapter *selective systems*. What each of these great ethical theories has done is to settle upon one empirically confirmable selective system and claim that it governs all moral decisions. It is this claim of universal adequacy made by each theory that leads to the usual criticisms of it. Within a limited sphere each seems to

be adequate and operates normatively as it is described by its proponents as operating. It seems possible that they may actually be complementary one to another, and that if each empirical normative system is brought into certain relations with the others, the various empirical norms may fit together. This is my belief, and the hypothesis here proposed for their mode of fitting together may be called the *social adjustment theory*.

Evidence for Natural Norms Established by The Empirical Theories of Ethics

Let me list the selective systems described by the empirical theories we have studied. I am changing the order in which we took them up, for a reason that will come out presently. These are:

Individual Values

1. *Purposive structures and the operation of prudence* controlling the satisfactions of desire and affection. These make up the group of the natural norms on which hedonistic theories are based.
2. *Personality structure* demanding personality integration in a harmonious, non-frustrating organization of a man's dispositions so that these are mutually adjusted to one another and to a man's social and physical environment. This is the natural norm on which the self-realization theory is based.

Social Values

3. *The social situation* demanding acts toward the reduction to the greatest degree possible of the social tensions produced by problematic situations. This is, of course, the basis for the pragmatic or social situation theory of the ethics.
4. *Cultural pattern,* a structure of social dispositions conspicuously demanding conformity. This demand for con-

formity by a cultural pattern is the basis for the cultural relativity theory of ethics. But on the appearance of cultural lag, this natural norm demands integration and is taken up into the social phase of the self-realization theory.

Biological Values

5. *Natural selection* which is the basis for the evolutionary theory of ethics.

The mere naming of these would seem evidence enough, after our earlier expositions, that natural norms controlling human conduct do exist. Descriptions of them can be easily tested and confirmed. They are, moreover, all normative in their effects. The goal-directed drives of purposive structures are corrective of the means selected for achievement. And the structure of a consummatory field attained in purposive behavior corrects the acts of anyone maneuvering for optimum delight. The integrative action of personality structure puts constant pressure upon disturbing habits by the pain and frustration of the repeated conflicts they produce. The social situation corrects an act which fails to resolve a social problem by the very increase of tensions so produced. The normative demands of conformity by a cultural pattern are all too obvious to need comment, as are the integrative demands for an adjustment of social institutions when cultural lag is felt. And, lastly, there is the corrective operation of natural selection, not only in organic evolution but in its impact on man's cultural patterns and hence on man's conduct. This was dwelt upon in the chapter on evolutionary ethics. There is abundant evidence of normative action in natural events through these various selective systems. The marvel is that any thoughtful or observant man could have persudaded himself to believe otherwise.

So, the challenge raised by the linguistic school and noted at the end of the last chapter is easily met, simply by calling attention to these normative structures operating in us and in our environment. The central problem in empirical ethics is not the

existence of natural norms of conduct. The main problem is what to do when there are so many of them. For they seem to conflict in their normative demands. What is good conduct by one norm seems often to be bad by another. How are these discrepancies to be accounted for?

The so-called "naturalistic fallacy" is, it now appears clear, a pessimistic way of calling attention to the discrepancies of the meaning of good depending on what natural norm is being referred to by a value judgment. Inevitably, and quite properly, what is found good by one norm will often be found bad by another. What is good in terms of pleasurable satisfaction is often bad in terms of cultural conformity, and what is considered good by both of these may be bad by the biological norm of social adaptation. But the fact that the application of the evaluative term "good" differs with each natural norm mentioned is no reason to deny the truth of the ethical applicability of evidences of positive or negative selection observed by these norms. Much less is it a reason to make up (hypostatize) a fictitious entity good, as G. E. Moore does, in order to eliminate these ambiguities.

So, once again the ethical problem is not whether there are normative processes in nature open to description. There are a number of such normative systems that have been adequately described and verified. The central ethical problem is how choices are made among them. Do some natural norms have precedence over others always or under some conditions? Or, as the problem is sometimes put, what are the lines of legislation among these natural norms? This is the big final question for empirical ethics. The social adjustment theory is an hypothesis which undertakes to answer that question.

The Lines of Legislation Among the Natural Norms

If we look closely at the list of natural norms or selective systems given facing title page, two features will be found that

are important for our question. One of these is the expansion of the range of application of the norms as we go from purposive structures to biological natural selection. The arrangement of these norms (different from the sequence in which we took up the ethical theories stressing them) is designed to emphasize this feature.

Purposive structure, the system of narrowest range, gives guidance to the particular *acts* of individual men. Strictly speaking, purposive structures exist and operate only within the bodies and minds of individual men. All satisfactions and dissatisfactions are felt only by individuals. Each individual literally feels only his own frustrations and achievements, pains and pleasures. A purposive structure thus makes its selections for good or correct acts, according to its normative drive and goal, only among the particular acts of a particular individual.

This remains true also when these purposes combine and compete in the area of prudence. As we saw in developing individual hedonism, there is no great persuasion needed to induce a man to be prudent. His own drives impelling him to attain their maximum satisfaction adjust among themselves to achieve this aim. He learns by his own misfortunes from bad judgment how to restrain violent impulses so as to avoid uncomfortable consequences.

Actually the area of prudence develops a selective system in its own right—the system of the *personal situation.* In the personal situation, through each individual's capacities of learning from experience, the various competing purposes are regulated to maximize their joint satisfactions in view of the consequences of the acts performed. The way in which these adjustments come to be made was described in some detail in the chapter on individual hedonism (Ch. 5).

Coming next is the selective system of a personality structure. We find that this makes its normative selections not upon a person's particular acts, but upon his character traits, his habits, his dispositions to act. A disposition to act is, accordingly, much broader in range than any particular act. It covers all the

acts channeled by that disposition. But a personality structure is still something limited to the body and mind of a particular individual. The range of operation of both purposive and personality structures is thus limited to individual persons. So these first two natural norms yield only individual values.

When we come to the social situation, however, the range of normative application extends over all the persons involved in a situation. It passes outside the limitations of the individual. But it is still limited by the effective personal desires of the various individuals involved in a particular social situation. And the structure of the situation applies only to *acts* performed toward reducing the tensions within the situation.

Proceeding next to the cultural pattern as a natural norm, we see that this like personality structure again deals with *dispositions*. For a cultural pattern is a set of institutions, and that means a set of social dispositions, for the guidance of social acts. In its rigid form a cultural pattern demands conformity, but in its fullness of operation it demands a harmonious integration of its institutions and seeks to change or eliminate the institutions which become obstructive and show evidences of cultural lag. Thus a cultural pattern is to a social situation as a personality structure is to a personal situation. And just as the range of a personality disposition is more extensive than that of a purposive act, so the range of a social institution is wider than that of an act performed toward reducing the tensions of a social situation. And as the norms of purposive structures and of personality structures together yield individual values, so those of the structures of social situations and cultural patterns yield social values.

Finally, with evolutionary natural selection, the range of application extends over the whole biological area, or, at least with man, over all cultural patterns, selecting these as totalities for their adaptability to their social and physical environment.

It is tempting, as one follows this series of expansions of the range of application of these natural norms, to conclude hastily that the norms of wider range would have a priority over those

of narrower range, and the widest would be the dominant empirical norm for ethics.

But there is another equally significant feature in this sequence bearing on the relative priorities of these norms. This is the polarity of the sources for the dynamics of the various systems. Though we have listed five levels of selective systems, only two of these have their own dynamic sources. These are the first and the last. The intermediate systems work only on borrowed energy. They receive their energy from the other two, and carry on their selective activity by channeling this energy in their own particular ways.

The energy source for the purposive structures is man's purposive drives. In the mature man these are partly instinctive and partly acquired. The instinctive drives are presumably the same, or nearly the same, for all men. The derived drives are largely the result of acculturation, though every man acquires drives of his own which are part of his personal individuality. Men's derived drives vary greatly from culture to culture and from man to man. All drives ultimately get their energy from the metabolic processes of the physical organism. That is to say, the source for the energy of every man's drives is his own physical body. This is why every man's purposive structures and their satisfactions and dissatisfactions are his own. They abide in his own body only. No man can switch the energy of one of his drives into another man's body, nor literally lend another man one of his own purposive structures nor any of his own purposive satisfactions.

The other dynamic source is that which energizes the process of natural selection. It is the activity of the evolutionary forces in the propagation and survival of an interbreeding population. As we saw in the chapter on evolutionary ethics this exhibits itself in social species in the selective survival of the group and in man in the selective survival of human societies with their cultural patterns. In evolutionary selection we encounter the dynamics of biological survival. And this is quite a different thing from the dynamics of purposive drives and satisfactions.

At the two extremes of our series of selective systems we thus find two distinct sources of energy—that for maximizing individual satisfactions and that for the survival of the group. These two dynamic sources set up a bipolar opposition of human values. At one pole are the individual values of purposive satisfactions, at the other the survival values for man and his social group. These opposite values may not be in conflict, but sometimes they are. When they are, man is confronted with his most serious type of moral problem. Then some adjustment must be made for man's very survival or that of his society, and this is what leads to the social adjustment theory.

The intervening selective systems between the two extremes channel the energy from the two poles in their own manner of selection. They have a degree of independence in their normative actions, and under certain conditions may be the decisive normative agents for a moral decision. But they depend upon the two poles in a way the poles do not depend on them. For only at the poles is the energy for ethical selections generated.

We are now ready to follow the lines of legislation among our five selective systems. At one time or another each of these poles acquires dominance over the other. The principle determining that dominance appears to be that of the *social pressure*. The greater the social pressure the more the dominance tends to shift toward the survival pole. The less the social pressure the more it tends to move toward the pole of individual freedom for personal satisfactions.

When the survival forces are dominant, there is need for social solidarity. Then, we find a tendency toward highly integrated social organization, toward centralized forms of political structure, and a rigidity of cultural pattern with binding rules of conduct. The moral decisions in the social situation are then relatively fixed by the rigid rules of an authoritarian cultural pattern. The personality structure is molded by the institutions of this cultural pattern to follow designated roles, and a rigid deeply acculturated conscience is developed. Discipline and loyalty to the group are indoctrinated. In the sys-

tem of purposive structures the satisfactions of achievement based on the role a person is expected to fulfill in the rigid social structure has dominance over the pleasures of consummatory enjoyment. Pleasurable enjoyment for its own sake may even be morally condemned as wicked and sinful, since it tempts a man away from his duties in the fullest achievement of his assigned role in serving the welfare of his society.

When the drives of purposive structures dominate, however, then it is the greatest freedom for individual satisfactions that has priority. And the consummatory pleasures have precedence over the values of achievement on the principle that the function of achievement is a means only to the attainment of the pleasures of consumption. A rigid conscience is deprecated as blocking rational control of conduct toward the greatest attainable amount of satisfaction in a man's life. The tight integration of a personality into a system of rigid roles is relaxed so that a man may choose or change his roles. The decisions of a social situation are freed from social rules and worked out in terms of individual consequences. A decentralized political structure is favored, with the positive intent of giving the individual the greatest feasible range of freedom of decision, and with the negative intent of blocking off by political checks and balances the possible rise of despots. And the pressures of the forces of survival are deliberately kept off at the greatest distance as conditions which must unfortunately be taken into account and adapted to, but the less they can be felt the better.

There are thus two opposite major directions in which lines of moral legislation may go. The one based on the dynamics of survival culminates in political socialism or authoritarianism and is exemplified among ethical theories in the most fully developed integrative self-realizationism. The other based on purposive drives culminates in the political organization of an individualistic democracy and is exemplified among ethical theories in individual and social hedonism.

Both of these ethical systems are empirically well authenticated. The evidence for individual drives and satisfactions as

genuine motivational forces in human conduct is beyond serious dispute. And the evidence for the evolutionary forces of survival and their manifestation among social agencies in the solidarity of their social organization is also well established. And every man has both of these forces for moral decisions imbedded in his body and mind. He is at once an individual with drives for satisfaction and a member of a social species intent on survival and the propagation of his kind. He is deeply motivated both to maximize his satisfactions and to consolidate with his group for the maximum security.

It is this latter force, incidentally, as we observed in the chapter on evolutionary ethics, that bridges the gap between individual and social hedonism. Hedonism by itself, as the ethical theory based on individual drives and satisfactions, is unable to bridge that gap, which every reflective hedonist in the maturity of the theory feels must somehow be bridged. This inner demand for extension beyond the individual which the hedonistic theory itself makes in order to become an adequate ethical theory is striking tacit evidence of how the two ethical theories representing the opposite poles of human energy are bound together in our total ethical concerns. Each needs the other to cover all the evidence. A complete empirical ethics must take both these views and their dynamics into account and yet not obliterate their opposition to each other. To bring out this opposition, let me present the following diagram which item by item shows the contrast in the type of social organization supported by these two views.

Functional Authoritarian Society	*Individualistic Democratic Society*
1. Survival as dominant motive.	1. Happiness as dominant motive.
2. Basic right of society over individual.	2. Basic right of individuals and instrumental view of society.
3. Centralization in government.	3. Decentralization in government.

Functional Authoritarian Society	*Individualistic Democratic Society*
4. Efficiency as chief aim of social organization.	4. Opportunity for individual enterprise and satisfaction as aim of social organization.
5. Discipline or team-play as social attitudes sought.	5. Initiative or tolerance as social attitudes sought.
6. Duty or loyalty as personal attitudes sought.	6. Satisfaction or compromise as personal attitudes sought.

The reconciliation of this opposition constitutes the view of the adjustable society here suggested. On this view the degree of integration necessary for security, and the degree of freedom of satisfactions that may be safely permitted, depends on the social pressure upon a society. The greater the pressure the greater the degree of social integration required; the less the pressure the greater the amount of freedom for individual satisfactions safely available.

The Relative Autonomy of the Natural Norms

Although the conspicuous lines of legislation run up or down between the social security demanded by the norm of natural selection and the satisfactions demanded by the drives of individual purposive structures, the intermediate selective systems also have a certain autonomy. For instance, the cultural lag of a cultural pattern is evidence that a cultural pattern has a legislative power of its own even when it is being pressed in one direction or another to give way to the adjustments demanded.

Cultural lag may be of two opposite sorts. Presumably the institutions of a cultural pattern originate in answer to some social need for which they are adapted. If this need is aggravated the institution may not be fully serving the need and will have to be rendered more rigorous to serve its function. But if there is a release of social pressure, the institution may no

longer be required. We should then expect the institution to disappear. And it soon would disappear if it was extremely distasteful in its demands and restrictive of men's freedom. But if it is not particularly onerous, it may well continue on its own momentum. There is a conservative element in any society which tends to preserve institutions just because they are the old traditional institutions. If they do not do any great harm, they stay on and gain an autonomy of their own. Thus a cultural pattern acquires a considerable range of operation in which it is a dominant ethical criterion.

The same is true of personality structure as a moral criterion. Here, however, the independence of a person as an autonomous (that is to say, a self-sufficient) source of moral decisions may be much greater than that of a cultural pattern. The ethical criterion here, as the chapter on the personal phase of the self-realization theory brought out, is that of the integrated personality. But the integration may be of two different sorts, one less fully integrated than the other.

There is the integration of a personality to his own particular culture. This is a rigid form of integration rooted in a strong authoritarian conscience. It is the personality associated with rigid discipline. It is likely to be regarded as ideal in a centralized society. Such a personality fitted to a special function in a functionally integrated society is a fully adapted organism. He has the great security of knowing his place and just what to do at any time. His task may be highly specialized. But though closely adapted to his particular cultural pattern, he is not adaptable. He would have great difficulty in adjusting himself to any other pattern.

The alternative form of personality integration is toward adaptability. This is the ideal of the well-rounded man. He has not been disciplined to the point of rigidity. He is not bound to the dictation of an authoritarian conscience (or, at least, not much). He has flexibility of judgment, broad interests and sympathies, and a humane conscience. Such a man is adaptable to many forms of society and conditions of living. Because of

this wider adjustability, he is actually a more highly integrated person than the narrowly adapted one.

In the history of the self-realization theory one can observe a vacillation between these two ideals of personality integration. In his *Republic,* Plato himself exhibits this vacillation. He admires the well-balanced, well-rounded man. At the same time, in the development of his integrated, functional society he is drawn more and more toward the production of a specialized man efficient in his function and content to stay within it. The social phase of the self-realization theory tends in this direction. The personal phase tends in the other.

What I believe this shows is that two competing selective systems are in operation here. The fully integrated society with the maximum of solidarity is the functional society, and this carried to its logical conclusion requires the disciplined specialist. The sanction comes thus primarily from the action of a cultural pattern directed toward social security. But such a specialist is not developed to the fullest capacities of an individual man. Only when a man has become developed to his fullest capacities is he a fully integrated personality.

Only he is the completely free moral agent, and many ethical writers make the ability of man to be a free moral agent a central condition for a sound ethics. Being free from a rigid conscience, and so free to pass judgment even on the unconditional demands of an authoritarian institution, he has full voluntary control of his decisions. He may have to comply. But he will know by what criterion he is complying, and how his act is sanctioned. He would be the man who could make the best adjustment to any form of society and whose impulses would be toward making that society itself as well-adjusted to the conditions of the time as possible. He is, of course, an ideal, but only as the extrapolation of the active integrative forces of the human personality seeking to keep human frustrations as low as possible. This is an ideal to be aimed at independently of all other selective systems.

The one remaining selective system, the social situation,

clearly has also its relative autonomy. To indicate this, I think I need only refer to the illustrations of moral decisions given in the chapter on the subject (Chapter 7). This selective system, like purposive structures, operates only on particular acts. What is the right act to perform, it asks, in a given situation? What act will most completely reduce the tensions there? Such an act always has some reference to the cultural patterns within which the act is performed, and to the satisfactions and personalities of the various people involved. Sometimes the decision has to do with cultural lag and long-range policy. But in the great majority of decisions reached in social situations, the situation itself, as the pragmatic moralists point out, contains close at hand the criterion of correct action. The situation is then virtually autonomous.

Conclusions for the Social Adjustment Theory

With the background of the preceding sections, we can now exhibit the conclusions for a Social Adjustment Theory.

First, when there is no problem of social adjustment, and so no conflict among the natural empirical norms, then the various natural norms can operate effectively and adequately in their own right (that is, autonomously) in reaching a correct empirically sanctioned ethical decision. The great proportion of human decisions are of this kind. Don't the beans need a little more salt? Aren't these sleeves too long? What is the matter with my car? Would this be a prudent investment? Is this habit of mine losing me friends? What is the fitting act in this delicate situation? What is the custom for an action of this sort?

In such instances the relevant criterion to apply for answering the question asked is easy to see. The right act may be more difficult to discover. For even when we know the criterion to apply for a problem of conduct, we may have trouble finding the best, or even an appropriate act to perform. But in instances like these, one is spared the most agonizing of all ethical

problems, that of determining what is the proper criterion to act upon.

The second sort of moral problem is precisely of the latter sort. It is the problem of determining how to choose between conflicting norms. According to the social adjustment theory, as an empirical ethical theory, the answer actually lies in facts. It depends upon the degree of social pressure on a society at a particular time. This determines whether the social institutions are exhibiting a cultural lag, and whether they should be tightened or relaxed to be adjusted to the existing conditions. Once the appropriate cultural pattern for handling the current pressures on a society is seen, then it becomes clear what duties or opportunities a person has. That is to say, a person can then see what personality dispositions are adapted to the cultural pattern appropriate to the social pressures of the time. Then these show the factors that have to be considered in reducing the tensions of any problematic social situation that arises, or how prudently to maximize the satisfactions in any personal situation. In short, the principle of social adjustment does give a way toward finding a solution for conflicts among empirical ethical norms.

The accompanying diagram will illustrate more clearly how this principle works. As we have seen, there are just two ultimate dynamic sources for selections pro and con affecting human conduct—that of men's purposive drives and that of the evolutionary process. These act in a sort of opposition to each other. This opposition shows up conspicuously when the social pressure is increased by changes in the physical or social environment or by changes within a society that throw it out of balance. The society then ceases to be adequately adapted, and on the principles explained in the chapter on evolutionary ethics (Ch. 10), it either organizes for the preservation of its cultural integrity or becomes increasingly threatened with destruction. With increase of social pressure, then, there is a tendency activated by the norm of natural selection toward a more integrated functional organization in the cultural pattern of a

ACTION OF BIPOLAR DYNAMICS ON ETHICAL NORMS

DYNAMICS OF PURPOSIVE DRIVES	SELECTIVE SYSTEMS	DYNAMICS OF EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS
	Cultural Pattern	
Open Society	Increase of social pressure →	Functional Society
	Decrease of social pressure ←	
	Social Situation	
Freedom	Increase of social pressure →	Security
	Decrease of social pressure ←	
	Personality Structure	
Initiative	Increase of social pressure →	Discipline
	Decrease of social pressure ←	
	Personal Situation (*Prudence*)	
Enjoyment	Increase of social pressure →	Achievement
	Decrease of social pressure ←	
	Purposive Structure	
Pleasure	Increase of social pressure →	Success
	Decrease of social pressure ←	

society, toward the ideal, that is, of the social phase of the self-realization theory. This is reflected in the selective system of the social situation for the society, in that the causes of the tensions will depend much more on a concern for security. This in turn will be reflected in a greater stress upon discipline in the personality development of the individual. And finally it will be reflected in a man's purposive acts in that he will be forced by prudence to sacrifice the gratifications of pleasure and enjoyment to the efficiency of achievement and success. For when a society is threatened with destruction, there is no time for individual indulgence.

On the other hand, when there is a decrease of social pressure, the dynamics of the individual purposive drives begin to assert themselves. If there is no longer an emergency nor any serious threat from without or within upon one's social group, there is no reason why one should not cultivate one's capacities of enjoyment and seek to spread happiness as widely as possible within one's society. Then individual initiative and freedom will have priority over discipline, and men will be concerned about security only in maintaining a constant vigilance so as to be prepared to ward off dangers before they become menacing. And then the open individualistic democratic form of society can supplant the centralized functional form.

From this analysis of the dynamic interrelations of the various selective systems in response to the degree of social pressure brought to bear upon them, we can come to certain practical conclusions as to what to do when a moral problem seems to arise from a conflict of ethical criteria. Let us take this up first from the point of view of an individual faced with such a moral problem, and then from the point of view of society faced with the need of clarifying its social policy.

The advice to the individual would be this: First, be sure that the problem is one of a conflict of moral criteria—that is to say, a conflict between two or more selective systems. For

it may be simply a question of reaching a very difficult decision under a single criterion. There are many social situations in which there is no problem of the criterion involved, but only of how best to resolve the tensions. There may be ignorance of some vital facts, there may be prejudices to overcome. These make the proper decision difficult to reach. But the data for the decision are all within definite bounds. And there is no problem of what criterion to employ in reaching the decision. Yet the very difficulty of reaching a decision in such problems often makes one wonder if there is not a conflict of moral criteria concealed in the situation. There may be, but not necessarily so. As we pointed out in the previous section, each selective system has a considerable range of autonomy. In a fairly stable society, most problems lie within one of these systems and do not involve a conflict of moral criteria.

But if there is a conflict of moral criteria, then the procedure is this: Find out as well as you can what degree of social pressure your society is subjected to. Then you will have an idea as to where the cultural lag is, if there is any. This in turn will show what weight to give to the two dynamic poles within which each selective system operates. A person is then in a position to tell how far he may be justified in seeking greater freedom from social conventions or aiming for more rigorous institutions in furtherance of human welfare; how far he may be justified in relaxing discipline for personal initiative or in sacrificing enjoyment and happiness for achievement and power.

These decisions require judgment. But through the recognition of the operation of social pressure in determining the degree of dominance of the criterion for social integration over that for purposive satisfactions and vice versa, there need no longer be any unresolvable conflict between these two ethical criteria or the others brought out in the empirical theories of ethics. It must, however, be added that the knowledge that the criteria are available to a man for resolving a moral problem does not mean that a man will necessarily find the proper resolution and not make serious errors of conduct. It simply means that a man by

thought and advice may find out what is morally right to do in much the same way that he can find out how to keep in good physical health.

Now for the matter of social policy. The ultimate problem here is what sort of social organization is best for man to live under. Each ethical theory has traditionally developed its own ideal. Two ideals stand out in the diagram for the dynamics of ethical norms on pages 322–323. There is the ideal of the functional society for which Plato's *Republic* is the classic example. And there is the ideal of the open individualistic society for which the political writings of Locke and Mill are classic examples. These are clearly, on our analysis, utopian extremes. Each would be appropriate only under conditions of extreme security or extreme danger. But they serve an important function in exhibiting the extremes and suggesting that the appropriate social structure at any time depends on the degree of social pressure—the greater the pressure the more the functional organization needed, the less the pressure the more room for individual freedom and the open society.

This observation leads to the judgment that especially in times of rapid social changes, the most secure and satisfying society would be not a fixed political structure but a flexible one adaptable to variations of social pressure. A rigid political ideal and structure will inevitably be unadapted most of the time during a period of social change, whether it be something like Plato's functional society or Mill's open representative society. The practicable ideal is that of an *adjustable society* that adapts itself readily to changes of social conditions and the impact of varying social pressures. This would be the intelligent society in control of itself and its environment. Rigid societies are unintelligent and subject to strain and eventual destruction when conditions are not suited to their forms. An adjustable society would have indefinite capacity for survival.

We are here getting beyond the scope of an ordinary ethics book and must bring our analysis to an end. But let me add just one important point concerning social policy. This is that men

as individuals with their drives and satisfactions lodged within themselves inevitably have a personal bias for human happiness. As soon as the conditions of survival are attained, and their efforts are not wholly occupied in obtaining food and avoiding suffering, they look about for happiness. In every individual there is thus a bias for the value pole of happiness and the open society designed especially to give him freedom to obtain it according to his own desires. The human strategy then should be to keep the social pressures down as far as possible, to keep at a distance the forces for survival and the need these bring for the disciplined functional society. Man in his social organization and his capacity for framing social policies has the intelligence to do this—if he can but get his intelligence to work to this end.

In present world conditions it is becoming more and more obvious that such an end can only be achieved if all men in some manner of social organization can be brought to co-operate in this enterprise. Though we still act as nations competing or standing outside of one another, in the present need of an organized brotherhood of man, nationalism is clearly a form of cultural lag. The appropriate adjustable society of the present era would consist in a union of all men. The way to obtain it may be devious, but the threat of human destruction is over us.

Final Definition of Moral Value

Early in this study we gave a tentative definition of ethics and we have considered various definitions of moral value as we passed from theory to theory. From time to time we said a final definition of these terms would have to wait till our study was completed. Now we are able to give this definition.

Our original definition of the subject matter of ethics, *a study of the criteria for good and bad conduct,* turns out to have been not a bad one. But the term "conduct" may be thought a little narrow when it is restricted to "voluntary action." For our

study carried us into judgments about personality dispositions and social institutions.

In developing a more precise final definition of ethics, I am going to disregard the intuitive, a priori, and linguistic theories as views that went off on unrewarding tracks. These views had to be considered since they were serious attempts to cope with the ethical problem. But having rejected them with, we believe, sound reasons, we can now confine our definition to the empirical approach to the subject.

When we took up the empirical theories in turn, none of them proved adequate to the full demands of the subject matter. Each had a deficiency of a different kind, which one or another of the alternative empirical theories filled out only to fall into a new deficiency of its own. The question has suggested itself of whether a way could not be found to gather these diverse theories together under some linking principles which would permit them to fill out one another's deficiencies and harmonize their conflicts.

We believe the principles that perform that function are those of (1) selective system, (2) the polarity of the dynamic sources activating the selective systems discovered, and (3) the operation of social pressure.

In describing the criteria of the great empirical theories, we found that these criteria in their effective sanctioning of human choices and decisions were all natural norms. We called them selective systems. Their structure was such that a single dynamic agency split two ways so as to activate trials and also activate a norm to correct those trials till the norm was "satisfied" and the energy "reduced." [2]

These norms were effective only over certain ranges of trials, and for any one of the classical empirical theories these trials did not cover the whole range of human conduct. Hence the conflicts over moral criteria arose. The selective system of hedonism extended only to the limits of individual prudence, and an acceptable bridge to social ethical judgments was lacking.

[2] See the formal definition of a selective system in Ch. 2, p. 28.

Cultural relativism had no way of justifying social reform. The pragmatic social situation theory could not adequately justify long range policies. The self-realization theory could not justify its ideal of a functionally integrated society against the individualistic demand for happiness. And lastly the evolutionary theory likewise fell afoul of the individualistic preference for an open free society.

Yet each of these systems possessed the dynamic sanctions to fill the deficiencies of the others. The problem was to justify the legislation of the systems that could fill the deficiencies over those that suffered from them. In order to work, this had to be at least a two-way legislation. For only so could the selective systems fill out each other's gaps with their own fullnesses. This two-way legislation was made possible by the discovery of the polar dynamics of this series of selective systems and the principle of social pressure which caused one end of the series to have dominance when the pressure was high and the other end when the pressure was low. Then the whole group of empirical norms with their respective theories fell into a single ordered series filling out one another's deficiencies by their legislation over one another according to the degree of social pressure present at any given time.

Thus the hedonistic criterion maximizing happiness is drawn within the cultural boundaries of a social group by the legislation of natural selection, which compels men for their security, however low the social pressure, to co-operate together in groups. The cultural lag which cultural relativity could not handle is rectified either by the relaxation demanded by hedonism or by increased organization according to the demands of integration, depending on the social pressure. The inability of the self-realization and evolutionary theories to reconcile the hedonistic demands for happiness with their demands for tighter social integration is overcome by the legitimacy of claims of hedonism to relax social organization when the social pressure is low and security no longer the primary demand on human action.

This theory of the flexible co-ordination of all dynamically sanctioned ethical norms by means of the concepts of selective system, bipolar dynamics, and social pressure is what I have named the social adjustment theory. Since our study culminates in this theory, the more refined definition of ethics and moral value would be nothing other than that which would be warranted by the social adjustment theory.

On this view *ethics* may be defined as *the study of the structure and operation of selective systems bearing on human activity and the lines of legislation running through them.* This definition centers on the concept of "selective system" which has a precision not possessed by the term "criterion."

The term "good" would refer to any positive selection made by a selective system, "bad" to any negative selection. No sharp distinction would here be suggested between "good" and "right" or "ought." These would be regarded as synonymous terms, though it must be admitted that our language habits do make distinctions in usage for these words in spite of a wide range of overlapping. Our defense for regarding them as synonyms is that our analysis of values in terms of selective systems is cognitively more justifiable than common sense usage. In other words, we would think it funny to require the details of a technical study to conform to the vagaries of common sense.

We are equating "good," then, with any positive selection of a selective system. Now, I am going to suggest that we equate the term "morally good" with a positive selection resulting from the operation of the *total set* of selective systems extending through their lines of legislation. An act or a disposition or an institution would be morally good only if it were a final selection which had passed through all the applicable selective systems of empirical ethics. It would be the final judgment of the whole structure of evaluative criteria relevant to the matter in hand. In this sense it is the ultimate value judgment that a man may make, or that may be made for a man. It may require great self-sacrifice, it may demand his life or the risk of his life,

but it is what the totality of social conditions and his own personality and position require of him at that juncture. On the other hand, it may be the consummation of his sweetest wish. But it is the whole judgment in either case. It is the final evaluation of all relevant evaluations.

This is what I believe can be found if we hold fast to the empirical approach to ethics and let the facts of value and evaluations guide us to the very end. There may be many errors in this particular treatment of the subject. But they can be corrected by going still more deeply into the facts of human valuings, observing how they operate in the world of natural events. As many of the ancient sages have reminded us, as well as the modern voice of science: Nature is our guide.

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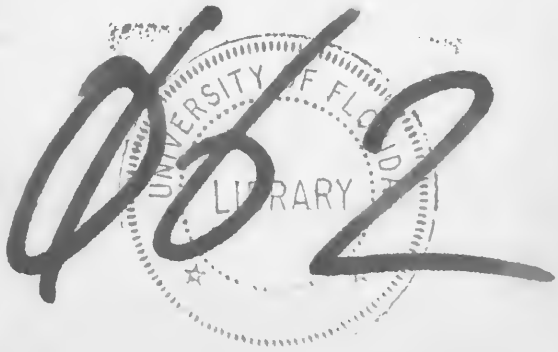
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